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OF THE REMOVE.

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TALE

By
FRANK
RICHARDS



"YOU—YOU MAD IDIOT!" HE MUTTERED HOARSELY.

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CHUMS OF THE REMOVE.



A SCHOOL TALE DEALING WITH THE ADVENTURES OF
HARRY WHARTON AND HIS CHUMS.

BY FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Siege of a Study!

HARRY WHARTON looked up from his work in Study No. 1, at Greyfriars, and uttered an exclamation of annoyance.

"What the dickens is all that row about?"

For some minutes there had been a terrific din in the corridor, composed of stamping, shouting, cat-calling, and kicking at a door. The noise was simply deafening, and Harry Wharton, who had been trying to work, naturally found it exasperating.

Nugent, who was sitting on the fender, looking after some chestnuts roasting at the study fire, glanced up, and shook his head.

"Blessed if I know," he replied. "Sounds as if some of the fellows were trying to get into a study further up the corridor, and can't manage it. It's only a Form row, I suppose."

"How the dickens am I to work while it's going on?" growled Wharton.

"Chuck it for a bit, and have some of these chestnuts," was Nugent's practical suggestion.

"I want to get finished."

There was a fresh roar in the corridor, a renewed stamp-

ing of feet, and the crash of heavy boots kicking at oaken panels.

"Open this door!"

"Come out, you cad!"

"Let us in!"

The confused and mingled shouts came to the ears of the fellows in Study No. 1. The noise was increasing instead of diminishing, and Harry Wharton laid down his pen, and rose from the table.

"Where are you going?" exclaimed Nugent, in alarm, getting up from the fender.

"I'm going to see what that row's about."

"It's no good interfering."

"They've no right to kick up such a disturbance when a fellow's trying to work!" growled Harry. "They ought to be at work themselves, as a matter of fact!"

Nugent laughed.

"Not much good your preaching industry to a crowd of the Remove, Harry," he remarked. "You're not exactly popular enough in the Form for your words to carry much weight."

Harry Wharton flushed angrily.

"You needn't keep on reminding me that I am unpopular," he said sharply. "I know that well enough, and I don't care a rap."

"I didn't mean to remind you of it, Harry but—"

"Well, I suppose I can go and see what the row's about, anyway," said Wharton, crossing to the door. "Even so unpopular a person as myself may ask a civil question and get an answer, I suppose."

Frank Nugent made no reply. He knew of old how useless it was to oppose Harry when he had made up his mind. He gave an expressive shrug of the shoulders, and followed his intractable chum from the study.

The roar of voices in the corridor increased in volume as the door was opened.

"Come out, you rotter!"

"Open this beastly door!"

"We'll burst it in if you don't!"

Wharton and Nugent looked along the corridor. Nearly a dozen fellows belonging to the Remove—the Lower Fourth Form at Greyfriars—were collected outside the door of Study No. 3, shouting, kicking at the panels, and thumping at them furiously. Conspicuous in the crowd towered the head and shoulders of burly Bulstrode, the bully of the Remove.

Wharton walked quickly along the passage, Nugent at his heels.

"Hallo! What's the matter here?"

Most of the fellows turned round to stare at him. Bulstrode gave him a particularly aggressive glare.

"What has that to do with you?" he demanded rudely.

Wharton's eyes flashed.

"I'm trying to work, and this fearful row is stopping me, that's all," he replied, "and I think that's enough, too."

"Trying to work, are you? You never seem to be doing anything else, that I can see, you beastly swot!" said Bulstrode. "Want to carry off another prize, eh?"

"That's my business!"

"Well, run away and work, if you want to," said Bulstrode. "I know you've had a mighty good opinion of yourself since you won the Seaton-D'Arcy prize, but you are not yet the head of the Remove. You can't give orders to the Form just yet!"

"I don't want to, but—"

"So the best thing you can do is to hook it," said Bulstrode. "I advise you as a friend."

"Keep your advice till I ask for it!" snapped Wharton.

"I tell you I can't work with this confounded row going on in the passage, and so I ask you, as decent fellows, to stop it."

"Rats! Catch us stopping it for you!"

"You see, this is how it is, Wharton!" exclaimed Trevor. "We want to see Hazeldene, and he's locked himself in his study, and we've got to get hold of him."

"That's it!" said half a dozen voices.

"What has he done?"

"Mind your own business!" growled Bulstrode.

"Oh, don't be a pig, Bulstrode!" said Trevor. "No harm in explaining. You ought to know better than we do, though Wharton. We've had a Form meeting, and decided that Vaseline has got to be punished for that dirty trick he played over the Seaton-D'Arcy affair."

"I thought it had been decided to send him to Coventry for a time—"

"You see, he takes that so calmly that we're bound to make him sit up somehow. Some of the Upper Fourth fellows have got hold of the story, and started chipping us about it. The Fifth and the Third will have it soon, and we shall never hear the end of it. We've got to show a proper regard for the dignity of the Form by making a public example of Vaseline."

"What are you going to do with him?"

"Well, we thought of a frog's march round the close," said Russell of the Remove. "Something like what we gave you the time you wouldn't come to football practice, you know, Wharton."

Harry Wharton turned red.

"Well, I don't care if you frog's march Hazeldene round the close, or round the county!" he exclaimed. "But I do object to this fearful row going on outside my door."

"It's really too bad, you know!" said Nugent pacifically.

"Well, you see, we must have Hazeldene out."

"Of course we must!" exclaimed Bulstrode. "I don't see what we're wasting time on Wharton for. Hallo, in there!"

"Hallo!" came back the voice of Peter Hazeldene, the cad of the Remove.

"Open this door!"

"Sha'n't!"

"We'll burst it in!"

"You'll get into a row if you do!"

"I don't care. We're going to make an example of you, Vaseline. You'll get off cheaper by facing the music at once."

There was no reply from within the study. Hazeldene had evidently made up his mind not to face the music.

"He won't come out, the obstinate brute!" exclaimed Bulstrode. "We shall have to make him open the door."

And he delivered a tremendous kick at the lower panels, which made the stout oak creak and groan.

That kick was the signal for a renewal of the attack upon the door of Study No. 3.

The juniors hurled themselves upon it, kicking and thumping and stamping, and shouting out threats of the things that would happen to Hazeldene if he did not open the door at the behest of the Form.

Harry Wharton stood biting his lips with anger. Nugent pulled him by the arm, but Harry would not move from the spot.

"Better come, Harry!" muttered Nugent. "It's no good rowing with half the Form. Besides, Hazeldene deserves to be ragged for his rotten trick over the exam."

"I don't know about that. Bulstrode is a beastly bully, and he's making this the excuse to rag a fellow who hasn't pluck enough to stand up for himself," said Harry, his brows knitting angrily.

Nugent looked at him in astonishment.

"Surely you're not going to stand up for a fellow who played you such a dirty trick, and nearly robbed you of the Seaton-D'Arcy prize!" he exclaimed.

Harry shrugged his shoulders impatiently.

"I don't care what he did to me!" he exclaimed. "I don't like this sort of thing, and I think Bulstrode ought to be made to shut up. He's always on the look-out for a chance to bully somebody, and to get the Remove to back him up in it. It was myself the other day, and now it's Hazeldene."

"Well, there's something in that, but I don't see what you can do."

"This row has got to stop!" growled Wharton. "I'm not going in to-morrow morning with my preparation undone, to please these silly asses. And I can't work with a row like a lunatic asylum broken loose in the passage. I say, Bulstrode!"

"Rats to you!" said Bulstrode.

"Stop that row!"

"Yes, I can see myself stopping it at your orders," said Bulstrode, with a grin; and he delivered a tremendous kick at the door.

Harry Wharton made a swift stride forward.

The bully of the Remove was quite ready for him, and in another moment the two old enemies would have been grappling.

But at that moment came a sudden interruption.

"Boys, how dare you make that disturbance in the corridor!"

It was the voice of Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, and a sudden silence fell upon the juniors as he strode to the spot.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Hard Cheese.

MR. QUELCH stared angrily at the group of juniors, and then at the bruised and battered panels of the door. The din in the passage had brought the Form-master up from his quarters on the lower floor. In their excitement the juniors had not remembered even the existence of the Remove master.

"Boys, I am amazed! How dare you make such a disturbance?"

"You see, sir—" began Trevor lamely.

Bulstrode had been the leader in the attack on the door, but he showed a strong desire now to allow others to take the lead. The change in the bully of the Remove, from truculence to sudden humility, brought a curl of scorn to the lip of Harry Wharton.

"It was like this, sir—" stammered Russell.

The Form-master was frowning darkly.

He was a good-tempered man as a rule, but it was very clear that he was angry now; and extremely angry.

"So no explanation is forthcoming," he rapped out. "Of course not! You belong to the Remove at a public school, and you have acted like a gang of hooligans in a slum."

The Removeites turned red. "I see that you, Wharton, are a prime mover in this disturbance."

Harry Wharton gave a start. As he had come out of his study to put a stop to the noise in the passage, it was rather hard to be taken for one of the rioters, but the Form-master's mistake was a natural one.

"If you please, sir—" said Nugent.

"I did not ask you to speak, Nugent."

"But—"

"Silence!"

Nugent bit his lip, and was silent. The Remove-master's angry glance swept over the group of juniors.

"This afternoon," he said, "is a half-holiday. You will

occupy it by writing out two hundred lines each of the *Aeneid*, and will not leave the school till they are written out and handed to me in my study."

Utter dismay fell upon the Removeites. The Form-master's sentence would interfere with the football practice, with the various excursions they had arranged for the afternoon; with everything, in fact.

But they knew that it was useless; or, rather, worse than useless to argue with the Form-master. A bitter look came upon Harry Wharton's face. He felt the injustice of the sentence as far as it applied to himself, but he was too proud to make any attempt to explain. Mr. Quelch would probably have cut him short. Nugent made one attempt, without success.

"May I speak, Mr. Quelch?"
"No, you may not!" snapped the Remove-master. "You may do two hundred lines of Virgil, as I have said, and take care that you bring them to me this afternoon. I am ashamed of you all!"

And Mr. Quelch stalked away, with his gown rustling behind him. The Removeites looked at one another.

"Well, that is coming it strong, and no mistake!" said Bulstrode. "There goes our half-holiday up the spout. All that rotter Hazeldene's fault!"

"All your own fault!" snapped Harry Wharton. "If you had shut up when I first asked you, this would not have happened."

"Quite true," said Trevor, with a nod.
"Well, it's one comfort that Wharton's dropped in for it, too," grinned Bulstrode. "Fancy old Quelch being in such a tantrum! I suppose we were making a bit of a row. Hope you'll like this way of spending a half-holiday, Wharton. You're fond of work, so there's some more for you to do."

"Somebody ought to have explained to Mr. Quelch," said Trevor, who was a good-natured fellow enough, though, like the rest of the Remove, he had little liking for Harry Wharton, who was too proud and reserved to be anything like a favourite. "It's beastly hard on Wharton, as he had nothing to do with the row."

"Serve him right for interfering!"
Harry Wharton went back to his study with Nugent. He was deeply annoyed, as the dark shadow on his face showed. There was an unpleasant glitter in his dark, handsome eyes.

"Hard cheese, Harry!" said Nugent, as he hurried over to the fire to look after his chestnuts. "Hallo! Burnt, as I expected."

"It's beastly injustice!" said Harry, biting his lips.
"Oh, don't get your back up against Quelch!" said Nugent. "Of course, finding us all there together, he thought we were all in it."

"He wouldn't allow us to explain."
"Well, he was in a temper," said Nugent; "and no wonder, considering the row those fellows were making. You were in a temper yourself."

Wharton grunted, and sat down at the table.
"Hallo, kids!"

It was a cheery voice at the door, as a pleasant, cheerful face looked in. It was Bob Cherry, of the Remove, and his bright face came like a ray of sunshine into the study.

Wharton looked up for a moment, and nodded without speaking, and Nugent grinned from the fender. Bob Cherry looked from one to the other.

"Not been rowing, have you?" he asked.
"No," said Nugent, laughing, "nothing of the sort."
"I heard a fearful row in the corridor just before I came up—"

"That was Bulstrode and his lot, trying to get into Hazeldene's study."

"Oh, they're after poor old Vaseline!" grinned Bob Cherry. "His slimy ways have got him into trouble at last. Serve him right!"

"And got us into trouble, too," said Nugent. "Quelch heard the row, and came up and made himself unpleasant."

"Lines, eh?" said Bob Cherry. "Never mind. I say, I want you two fellows to come out with me this afternoon. I'm thinking of getting a trap in the village, and going for a drive, and as Wharton can drive—"

"Can't come," said Wharton, without looking up.
"Booked for the afternoon?"

"Yes, in a way."
Bob Cherry whistled.

"Just my luck! Never mind, I—"
"We're detained," explained Harry Wharton. "We were in the passage when Quelch came down on Bulstrode's gang, and he lumped us all together, and gave us two hundred lines each of Latin, to be done this afternoon."

"My hat! That was coming it rather strong."

"Beastly injustice!" growled Wharton. "I was getting my prep. done early, so as to have the afternoon and evening free, and now—"

"It's rough. But weren't you really mixed up in the row?"

"No, of course not. I went out to stop it."

"KIDNAPPED!"

Another Tale of Harry Wharton and his Chums,
by FRANK RICHARDS.

EVERY TUESDAY, The "Magnet" ONE HALFPENNY. LIBRARY.

"Ha, ha! But why didn't you explain to Quelch?"

Harry Wharton was silent.

"He wouldn't listen," said Nugent. "I tried to, but he was in a tantrum."

"Well, that's soon settled," said Bob Cherry. "I'll explain to him, if you like."

Harry Wharton made a hasty movement.

"Don't do anything of the kind!" he exclaimed.

"Why not?"

"We can stand it. He was unjust; and I'd rather do two hundred lines, or two thousand, than ask anything at his hands!" said Wharton savagely.

"Rot!" replied Bob Cherry promptly. "There's no sense in sulking under a sense of injustice, when the thing can be set right by a few words."

Nugent looked at Wharton. He agreed with Cherry, but he did not like to try to overrule his obstinate chum. Harry Wharton shook his head passionately.

"I tell you, I don't want you to go to him, and that settles it!" he exclaimed.

"Not by long chalks," said Bob Cherry coolly. "It doesn't settle it. If you don't consent to my going to the Form-master—"

"I don't, I tell you!"

"Well, then, I dare say I can manage to do it without your consent," said Bob Cherry, going out of the study and closing the door with a slam.

Wharton sprang up and tore the door open; but Bob Cherry was already at the end of the corridor, and going down the stairs three at a time. Wharton turned back into the study with a passionate exclamation.

"Oh, keep your wool on!" said Nugent. "Cherry means well, and if he gets us off that detention it will be a jolly good thing."

"I won't have any meddling with my affairs!" exclaimed Wharton angrily. "I suppose I can do as I like without being dictated to by Bob Cherry?"

"Well, you see, I'm concerned in this as well as you," said Nugent, "and I don't want to lose my half-holiday if I can help it."

Harry Wharton gave a scornful laugh.

"I would not ask anything of Mr. Quelch now for a dozen holidays!" he exclaimed.

"Neither would I, if he were the tyrant you are trying to make him out," said Nugent quietly; "but he's a decent master, labouring under a mistake, and there's nothing mean or undignified, that I can see, in pointing it out to him."

Wharton did not reply. He flung himself angrily into his chair, and took up his pen, but he did not resume his work. A quiet mind was needed for that. He waited, with a gloomy frown upon his brow, for the return of Bob Cherry.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

No, Thanks!

BOB CHERRY looked back as he reached the bottom of the stairs, and, seeing that he was not pursued, took his way at a more leisurely pace towards the Remove master's study. There was a genial grin upon Bob Cherry's features. He was interfering in the matter from a natural desire to see right done, and to save Nugent from an unjust detention.

Towards Harry Wharton his feelings were different. It was very difficult to like Harry. Bob Cherry was growing to understand what splendid qualities might be hidden behind the reserved manner of the proud, silent lad. But Wharton's pride was not pleasant to those who felt, as it were, the keen edge of it, and it is to be feared that the mischievous Bob sometimes found amusement in provoking the hasty, passionate temper of Harry Wharton.

Bob Cherry knocked at the door of the Form-master, and Mr. Quelch's voice bade him enter. Bob Cherry entered.

"Ah, it is you, Cherry!" said Mr. Quelch. "You have come, I suppose, to bring me the lines I gave you this morning for inattention in class?"

Bob Cherry coloured.

"N-no, sir," he replied; "I—I haven't done them yet. I was thinking of doing them this evening, sir, if you don't mind."

Mr. Quelch smiled. Like nearly everybody at Greyfriars, he liked Bob Cherry for his frank and open-hearted ways.

"Well, well, Cherry, I dare say that will do," he said.

"But what is it now?"

"I want to speak to you, sir."

"Proceed."

"It's about Wharton and Nugent."

Bob Cherry hesitated, and the master of the Remove

NEXT TUESDAY.

signed to him to go on, though he was looking a good deal surprised.

"About their detention, sir," said Bob Cherry, encouraged. "I have just heard that they have to stay in this afternoon and do lines."

For taking part in a most unprecedented and outrageous riot in the upper corridor," said Mr. Quelch, with a majestic wave of the hand.

"But they didn't, sir."

"Eh? I do not understand you, Cherry!"

"They didn't take part in the row, sir. They went out of their study to see what it was all about, and then you came up."

A shade of vexation crossed Mr. Quelch's face.

"Is it possible?"

"Yes, sir, that's how it is."

"How do you know this, Cherry? You were not there."

"They've just told me, sir."

"Ahem! I know you to be a truthful boy, Cherry. You are certain of what you say?" said the Remove-master, pursing his lips.

"Quite certain, sir."

"Then—ahem!—then you may tell Wharton and Nugent that they are relieved of their detention," said Mr. Quelch. "I am sorry they did not explain at the time. Perhaps, however, they did not have an opportunity. You may give them my message, Cherry."

"Thank you, sir!"

"And—in consideration of your having brought this unfortunate misapprehension to my notice," said Mr. Quelch, "you—you are excused your own lines."

Bob Cherry turned red.

"Oh, sir, I—I didn't mean that! I—I——"

The Form-master smiled genially.

"I know you did not think of that, or anything like it, Cherry," he said. "You are not the kind of boy to think of a reward for doing your duty. That is why I wish to recognise your conduct in this way. You are excused the lines. You may go."

"Thank you very much, sir."

And Bob Cherry left the study, in a very genial and grateful frame of mind. He ascended the stairs to take the good news to No. 1 Study. Bulstrode was coming along the passage. He stopped Bob Cherry.

"Hallo, kid," he exclaimed, "I suppose you know half the Form's detained this afternoon, through that young cad Hazeldene?"

"I thought it was for making a row in the passage," said Bob Cherry innocently.

"Well, so it was; but we were making the row because he wouldn't open his door. He had locked himself in his study when he found we were after him."

"I see. What were you going to do with him?"

"Make an example of him to the whole school. We thought of a frog-march round the close, and then making him run the gauntlet in the gym., and then——"

Bob Cherry burst into a laugh.

"Then I don't wonder at his locking himself in his study," he remarked. "He wouldn't be exactly looking forward to that sort of an entertainment."

"He's got to go through it, though," said Bulstrode, with lowering brows, "especially now he's got us detained for the afternoon. The youngsters in the Third Form have been chipping us about cheating at exams."

"Why, you haven't been cheating at exams., have you?"

"No," howled Bulstrode, "but Vaseline has. He tried to do Harry Wharton out of the Seaton D'Arcy prize by a mean trick, as you know as well as I do."

Bob looked the bully of the Remove straight in the eyes. "I know all about it," he said. "But he's been sent to Coventry, and now I think the matter ought to be allowed to drop. It's time!"

"Rot," said Bulstrode—"utter rot! I stopped you to ask you if you were going to take a hand in the game this afternoon."

"What game? I thought you were detained?"

"We shall be out before tea-time, then we're going to put Vaseline through it."

"Better leave him alone."

"Rats! I didn't ask you for any advice on the subject, Bob Cherry. I want to know whether we're to depend upon you to lend a hand in ragging that young cad."

"No, you're not!" said Bob Cherry tartly.

"Go and hang yourself, then!" said Bulstrode, turning away. Bob Cherry tapped him on the shoulder and stopped him.

"Look here," said the new boy in the Remove, "I know you, Bulstrode. You've had some quarrel with Hazeldene, I suppose, and are spiteful about it; and you're a bully of the first water. You don't care a rap about the trick he played on Wharton. You were pleased when you thought

Wharton had lost the Seaton-D'Arcy, and you couldn't hide your disappointment when the truth came out and he won it. You've picked on this as an excuse for ragging Hazeldene because you're a beastly bully——"

Bulstrode's face had gradually assumed the hue of a well-boiled beetroot as he listened to Bob Cherry's plain speaking.

"You—you confounded cad!" he howled at last, interrupting Bob. "Do you want me to wipe up the passage with you?"

"Yes, if you can do it," said Bob Cherry calmly.

Bulstrode looked savagely at him. He was a head taller than the new boy at Greyfriars, and, in fact, old enough and big enough to have been in the Shell long ago, if he had not been too idle and careless to get his remove. But there was something in Bob's look that made him hesitate to attack the junior.

"Now you know my opinion of you and your precious ragging," said Bob Cherry. "I'm not going to have a hand in it, and I look on you as a beastly bully. That's straight from the shoulder, and you can put it in your pipe and smoke it."

And Bob Cherry walked away, leaving Bulstrode standing there, scowling and biting his lips with rage.

Bob Cherry entered No. 1 Study, and bestowed a hearty slap upon Nugent's shoulder. Harry Wharton did not look up.

"You've seen Quelch?" asked Nugent.

"Yes, I've seen him, and he's listened to reason. I've explained, and you're let off your detention," said Bob.

"Good! What do you think of that, Harry?"

Harry Wharton knitted his brows.

"I think it's like Bob Cherry's cheek to meddle in my concerns—at least, without being asked," he retorted.

Bob Cherry turned red.

"Is that how you look at it?" he exclaimed. "Is that what you call gratitude, Wharton? I've got you out of a scrape——"

"Unasked."

"Oh, rats! You are a sulky beast, that's what is the matter with you!" exclaimed Bob Cherry warmly. "You ought to be sent to Coventry. That's what you want."

Harry Wharton rose to his feet, his eyes gleaming dangerously.

"Do you want to be thrown out of this study, Cherry?" he asked, his voice trembling with anger.

Bob Cherry's eyes were gleaming, too.

"You tried to do that once before, if you remember," he said. "I don't think you made much of a success of the job."

Harry Wharton made a swift step forward, but Nugent pushed him back.

"None of that, Harry!" he said, with a new sternness in his voice. "Bob Cherry has come here as my friend."

Harry's hands dropped to his sides again.

"Have your own way," he said sulkily; "I don't care."

Bob Cherry's face relaxed; his brief anger passed. He was never angry for more than a few moments.

"I say, what's the good of rowing?" he exclaimed. "I have done you a good turn, at all events. It's going to be a jolly fine afternoon. You're not detained now. Will you both come out with me in the trap? I've hired the trap already for the three of us, and it's my treat. I'd be glad for you to come."

"I will, with pleasure," said Nugent, "and thank you."

Harry Wharton was silent. Bob looked at him.

"Well, and you, Wharton?"

"I won't come."

"Don't be a cad," said Nugent; "come with us, Harry. Why can't you?"

"Because I don't choose."

For once Nugent looked angry. His patience had many times been sorely tried by Harry's intractable temper, and it looked like giving way now.

"Well, do as you like," he said. "I don't see why I should refuse Cherry's offer because you choose to be sulky. I'm going."

"Go, and be hanged!"

Nugent relented again.

"I wish you'd come, Harry."

"I won't come!"

"That settles it!" said Nugent, turning to Bob Cherry with a set face. "I'm coming with you, Cherry. What time do we start?"

"The trap's going to be ready at half-past two. We're to call at Jobson's for it."

"I'll be ready, then."

Bob Cherry nodded. He cast a curious glance at Wharton. Wharton had opened his books again, and was working. His face was hard and sullen.

"I say, you fellows——"

It was Billy Bunter's voice. Billy Bunter, known in the Remove as the Owl, on account of the huge spectacles which adorned his visage, shared Study No. 1 with Wharton, Nugent, and Bulstrode. He had just come in, in time to hear the last few words.

"Hallo, Owl!" said Bob Cherry.

"I say, you fellows," repeated Billy Bunter, "I hear you want a third party in your trap. I'll come if you like, as Wharton won't. Wharton is a sulky bouncer, you know, and it's no good trying to persuade him. Besides, I'm much better company than he is. I'd offer to pay my whack, you know, but my postal-order hasn't arrived. I've been expecting a postal-order for some days now, but it has got delayed somehow. You had better take a lunch-basket in the trap, you know. I'll come with you if you like."

Bob Cherry laughed.

"You can come if you like, Billy. Meet you at the door at two-fifteen, you two."

"Right-ho!" said Nugent.

"I won't be late," promised Billy Bunter, blinking at Bob Cherry. "I'll be there; and if you take my advice, Cherry, you'll have a lunch-basket in the trap—"

But Bob Cherry was gone.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER. The Hunting of Hazeldene.

THE close was quiet and deserted under the old elms. The spring sunshine fell brightly upon the old trees, glimmering on the budding green on the twigs, and falling in patches of light amid the shadows of the great branches.

Harry Wharton was walking alone there, with a book under his arm.

In the Remove-room, in the great grey building, nearly a dozen lads were suffering detention, and wearily writing out line after line of the great classic which, from being used as a form of punishment, was growing stale and wearisome to them, instead of glowing with the life and light of grand old days. The detention was growing near its end now, save for the very slow workers.

Harry Wharton was not thinking of them, nor of his escape from a similar punishment by the intervention of Bob Cherry. He was thinking of himself mainly—a fault his solitary nature frequently caused him to fall into. He was feeling lonely and depressed.

Bob Cherry, Frank Nugent, and Billy Bunter had gone off cheerfully enough at a quarter-past two to walk down to the village and take out the trap. A drive through the pleasant country lanes in the springtime of the year was decidedly pleasant, and Harry Wharton thought of them bowling along gaily with a swelling heart. He had acted unreasonably, he knew, but he had hardly expected Nugent to take him at his word. He would not admit to himself that he had grown so accustomed to Nugent's patience as to presume upon it. His hasty word had been taken; Nugent was gone, and Harry was feeling lonely and deserted.

Most of the Greyfriars fellows were beyond the walls of the school. From the Sixth Form ground came the distant shouts of the footballers, practising. The Lower Forms were out of gates, save for Harry, strolling moodily under the elms, and the detained dozen, writing away wearily in the Form-room the half-understood lines which told of the adventures of the fleeing Trojan and his comrades. And one other!

Harry Wharton looked round at the sound of a footstep, and saw Hazeldene of the Remove. Hazeldene nodded to him with an ingratiating smile. The cad of the Remove was not looking in fine feather. He had a worried, hunted expression which was new to him.

Hazeldene had earned the nickname of Vaseline in the Greyfriars Remove by his oily and insinuating ways, and he usually contrived to keep on good terms with most of the fellows, though none really liked him.

But he had made a "bloomer" at last.

The attempt to win the Seaton-D'Arcy prize by an unfair trick had roused the indignation of the Remove to a high pitch, and it was impossible for Hazeldene, with all his cunning, to pacify his incensed Form-fellows.

More than once Hazeldene had lent a hand in ragging some fellow or other who had been obnoxious to the Remove, Harry Wharton among others. But he had no desire to take a dose of the same medicine himself. He had quivered like a cornered rabbit in his study that day with the Remove hammering at the door. Now he went about in momentary anticipation of trouble.

Strangely enough, Harry Wharton, the boy whom he had injured, was the only fellow in the Remove whom he did not fear now.

There was something about a nature like Harry's that reassured him. Harry Wharton was passionate, and as likely to knock him down as to look at him at a word. But even in the contempt he knew Harry felt for him, Hazeldene found a feeling of security. He knew that Harry,

though he had most cause to complain, would never have a hand in the persecution he was subjected to.

Harry gave him a cold look as he came up, almost squirming in his desire to be agreeable.

"Hallo, Wharton," he said, with painful affability, "I see you're not gone with Nugent!"

"No!" said Wharton shortly.

"Feel inclined to come for a stroll?"

"No!"

"I suppose you don't know when Bulstrode will be coming out?"

"No!"

"He's a rotten beast!" said Hazeldene viciously. "He's started all this against me because I wouldn't lend him half-a-sovereign when I had a tip from my pater yesterday!"

Harry Wharton was silent.

"I see you're not taking part in it, Wharton. As a matter of fact, old fellow, it was really more a joke than anything else—what I did over the exam., you know—I never meant to keep the prize!"

"Don't tell lies!"

"But, really—"

"Oh, don't talk to me!"

Hazeldene's lips were drawn tightly over his teeth. He looked as if he would have sprung upon Harry Wharton just then, if he had dared, as was indeed the case.

"Well, you needn't be so rotten about it!" he growled, after a moment. "I've been put through it enough. I think, since it happened. The whole Form's down on me. Bob Cherry said I ought to be thankful for not being given away to the doctor and expelled. But what's the good of striking it out here, if it's going to be like this? I'm sick of it, I can tell you!"

Harry Wharton's face relaxed a little as he caught something like a whimper in Hazeldene's voice. He had known what it was like to be solitary and disliked, and he felt a touch of compassion even for the cad of the Remove.

"Well, it was your own fault!" he said, after a pause.

"You knew what you were risking when you played that trick. And you were lucky not to be expelled."

"If you call this luck," said Hazeldene, "I've had enough of it! I'd cut it all, and leave Greyfriars, if it were not for the mater and—and my sister. She would be disappointed— Ah, what's that?"

It was a loud shout, ringing across the close. It told of boys released from detention, and running wild in the joy of freedom. Hazeldene changed colour.

"They're out!"

He gave a quick glance round, and hurried away. Harry Wharton smiled contemptuously. He would have been torn in pieces before he would have shown such a craven spirit.

The detained Removeites were at liberty. There was reason for Hazeldene's uneasiness, for it was extremely probable that their first thought would be to get to close quarters with the fellow to whom they considered that they owed their detention. There was a sudden rush of feet under the elms in the old quiet corner of the close.

"There he is!"

A moment more, and Harry Wharton was surrounded by Removeites. Then there was a general exclamation of disappointment.

"It's not Vaseline!"

"It's the Wharton beast!"

Bulstrode came up to Harry with an aggressive manner.

"Where's Vaseline?"

"If you mean Hazeldene, I don't know," said Harry coldly.

"Haven't you seen him?"

"Yes."

"How long ago?" demanded half a dozen voices.

"A few minutes."

"Good!" said Bulstrode, with great satisfaction. "You can come along with us and lend a hand, if you like, Wharton. Which way did he go? We're going to put him through it this time, and no mistake. He's mucked up our half-holiday, and we're going to make him properly sorry for himself. Eh—what?"

"Rather!" said Trevor. "Which way did he go, Wharton?"

Harry Wharton did not speak.

"Which way?" bawled Bulstrode. "Quick! We want to collar him before he can hide himself anywhere! He'll skulk about till tea-time if we give him a chance. He knows we can't touch him when the masters are about!"

"I'm not going to tell you!"

"Why not?"

"I don't like this idea of ragging Hazeldene."

"You confounded, cheeky rat!" roared Bulstrode. "Tell us where he is, or we'll wipe up the mud in the close with you!"

Harry's face set obstinately.

"This way!" yelled a voice further off under the elms. "He's dodging round the gym. I saw him!"

With a yell, the whole troop rushed off, leaving Harry Wharton standing alone. The Removeites disappeared round the gym., on the track of the unhappy cad of the Form, and silence fell on the old close again.

Harry Wharton shrugged his shoulders carelessly. He was sorry for Hazeldene; but, after all, the fellow was a cad, and deserved punishment. It was no business of his, anyway.

But he had not seen the last of the affair, as he thought. There was a sudden pattering of feet, and a white-faced boy came tearing through the shadows of the elms, and reeled and fell almost at Harry Wharton's feet. Harry started towards him with a cry.

It was Hazeldene. He was utterly exhausted, and panted like an overwrought animal as he crouched there in the shadow of a huge trunk.

"Wharton!"—his voice came hoarse, broken, gasping—"Wharton! Help!"

THE FIFTH CHAPTER. Not all Bad..

AFTER him!"

Harry Wharton stood hesitating. The sheer terror of the cad of the Remove touched his heart strangely—his heart, which had never known fear.

The whooping of the fellows in pursuit could be heard coming closer. They had evidently caught Hazeldene once, and he had got away. Now they were close upon the track again, and to avoid them was impossible.

The instinct of the hunter is easy to rouse in any human breast. The Removeites had almost forgotten the original cause of the trouble now. They were the hunters, and Hazeldene was the hunted, that was all. They threw themselves into the thing with the zest of fox-hunters.

As Harry stood looking down upon the wretched boy at his feet, the Removeites came on the scene with a rush, and surrounded them. Bulstrode and King thrust themselves between Harry and the cad of the Remove. The wretched junior was dragged to his feet by half a dozen pairs of hands.

"Got him!" roared Bulstrode.

"Got him!" roared the Remove.

"Keep under the trees!" exclaimed King. "We don't want to be spotted from any of the study windows."

"Right-ho!" exclaimed Bulstrode, and the victim of the Remove's wrath was dragged away further into the shadows of the thick old elms. "Keep him tight!"

"We've got him!"

"Don't struggle, you fool; you'll only get it worse!"

"Keep still, you young idiot!"

Hazeldene was struggling savagely, almost hysterically. He was fighting with hands, feet, and nails, and several of the Removeites reeled away with red marks scored down their faces.

"The—beast!" howled Trevor. "He's scratching like a cat! Hold his beastly hands!"

"Tie his wrists together with his handkerchief!" said Bulstrode.

"Good idea!"

"Let me go!" screamed Hazeldene—"let me go! Help! Help!"

"Shut up, you fool!"

"Help!"

"Stick a lump of turf in his silly mouth! Anybody would think we were killing him!" said Trevor, in great disgust. "He's not getting it half so bad as he helped to give it to Wharton once himself."

"Rotten coward!" said King.

"Let me go—let me go!"

"Not this time, kid! Keep his beastly hands tight, or he'll start scratching again! Here's his handkerchief!" said Bulstrode. "Hallo, what's this?"

He held up a locket which had fallen from Hazeldene in the struggle. The catch had been sprung, and it was open, and, to Bulstrode's amazement, the photograph of a girl was revealed—the face of a young girl with laughing eyes.

"My hat," roared Bulstrode. "look here!"

He held up a locket which had fallen from Hazeldene in upon Hazeldene was relaxed, and the juniors crowded round staring at the locket.

"Hallo, didn't know Vaseline was in love!"

"Jolly good-looking!" said King. "But fancy her taking notice of a squirming little rat like Vaseline!"

"By Jove," said Bulstrode, "I like this chivvy! Can I have it, Vaseline? I'll stand you a tanner for the locket."

"Give it me!" shouted Hazeldene furiously.

"Rats! I'll give you back the locket presently," said Bulstrode, putting it into his pocket; "but I'm going to keep the photo."

"Give it to me!"

"Yes; we'll give it to you—the ragging!" grinned Bulstrode. "Collar him! Give it him! Ha, ha!"

Hazeldene struggled furiously in the hands of the Remove. "You coward! Give me my sister's photograph!" he yelled.

Bulstrode stared at him.

"Your sister!"

"My hat," exclaimed Russell, "fancy that squirming young monkey having a stunning sister like that! I don't believe him!"

"I don't, either!" said King. "We should have heard of it before if he had a sister like that. It's a whopper!"

"She's my sister, and—"

"Rats!" said Bulstrode. "Anyway, I am going to keep the photo! I've got photos of other fellows' sisters, so I don't see why I shouldn't have a photo of yours, if she is your sister. You shall introduce me some time. Meanwhile—"

"Will you give me that photograph?"

"No, I won't! Now—"

"Let me go!" screamed Hazeldene, struggling. "You cads, let me go! If Bulstrode won't give it up, I'll fight him for it, and I call on you all to see fair play."

The Remove was so astounded that they let Hazeldene go at once. The idea of Hazeldene, the cad of the Form—the fellow who had been known to let a Third Form jag bully him—fighting the burly Bulstrode seemed comical.

Bulstrode, the bully of the Form, could have licked any fellow in the Remove, with possibly a couple of exceptions, and he would not have thought of making more than a mouthful, so to speak, of Hazeldene.

After the first moment of absolute amazement, the Removeites burst into a roar of mocking laughter. As loud as any laughed Bulstrode.

But Hazeldene, for once in his life, was in deadly earnest. He stood free for the moment, and he did not attempt to fly. He strode straight up to the bully of the Remove, his eyes flashing with a light the Greyfriars fellows had never seen in them before.

"Will you give me that photograph?"

"Ha, ha! No!"

"Then take that, you coward!"

And Hazeldene's open hand smote the bully of the Remove across the cheek with a crack that sounded like a pistol-shot.

Bulstrode staggered back, more from surprise than anything else. There was a murmur of amazement from the Remove. The fellows looked at Hazeldene with a new respect, and not a hand was raised to touch him.

Bulstrode recovered himself in a moment. His face was suffused with rage as he glared at the cad of the Form.

"You—you mad idiot!" he muttered hoarsely. "Do you know what you are doing?"

"Give me my locket!"

"Collar him, chaps! He shall have it a bit stronger for that!" cried Bulstrode.

Not a Removeite made a motion to obey.

"Collar him yourself," said Trevor. "He has challenged you to fight him, and I don't see how you can get out of it."

"Get out of it! Do you think I want to get out of it?" yelled the infuriated Bulstrode. "Don't talk rot, Trevor! You know I could cripple him with one hand!"

"Well, you'd better take up his challenge, then!"

Bulstrode glared at Hazeldene, breathing fury.

"Do you mean that, you young fool?" he snarled. "Do you mean that you will fight me? Do you know what you are talking about?"

"You've got to give up the locket, or fight me," said Hazeldene, with a determination of manner no one had ever observed in him before.

Bulstrode laughed harshly.

"Well, it won't be much of a penalty to fight a rat like you!" he exclaimed. "Take off your jacket, you young fool, and come on!"

Hazeldene's lip quivered for a moment. He was not brave, and he was no match for Bulstrode. He had taken on a task from which fellows in the Remove who had thrice his pluck would have shrunk.

"Will you give me the locket, Bulstrode?"

Bulstrode laughed again.

"No, I won't!"

"Then come on," said Hazeldene, setting his teeth.

"You—you thief! Come on!"

And Bulstrode came on, his eyes a gleam, his fists clenched, only to be swung back by a sharp grip on his shoulder ere he could touch the cad of the Remove. He turned round savagely, to find himself looking into the face of Harry Wharton.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Hazeldene Faces the Music.

WHARTON'S hand dropped from the bully's shoulder, but his glance was calm and steady as he met Bulstrode's furious look. Harry had remained an amazed spectator of the scene, as amazed as anyone by the new development of the character of the boy who had been regarded in the Remove as the personification of unmanly qualities. An impulse had moved him to interfere now—a generous impulse, which was as much a part of his nature as was the hot and passionate temper which had so often brought him into difficulties.

"What do you mean, Wharton?" exclaimed Bulstrode savagely. "What—"

"Stand back!" exclaimed King.

"I won't stand back!"

"What are you interfering here, for?"

"To see fair play! In the first place, Bulstrode has no right to keep the photograph of Hazeldene's sister."

"Mind your own business!"

"As Hazeldene says, he's a cad, and a thief to keep it," went on Harry, unmoved by the threatening looks round him. "Hazeldene's a brick to fight him for it, and a better man than I ever suspected him of being—a better man than Bulstrode will ever be. If Bulstrode weren't a cad, he would give up the locket!"

"That's not the point now," said Trevor. "He's going to fight Hazeldene, so stand back and let them get to business before any beastly prefects come down on us and put a stop to it."

"Stand back, confound you!" shouted Bulstrode.

"Very well; but if there's going to be a fight, it's going to be a fair one, that's all," said Harry composedly. "I'll be your second, if you like, Hazeldene."

No other fellow there would have offered to be second to the cad of the Remove, and Hazeldene gave Wharton a grateful glance.

"Thank you, Wharton," he said, in a low voice.

"Get your jacket off," said Harry. "You'd better form a ring, you fellows, and give them plenty of room. Stand back."

It was strange how the Remove obeyed the directions of the most unpopular fellow in the Form!

But they did! The ring was formed, and Bulstrode, who had intended to rush the affair through, as beneath his dignity to take seriously, sulkily removed his jacket, and rolled up his sleeves. Harry Wharton helped Hazeldene off with his jacket. The cad of the Remove was very pale, but the new determination was still in his face.

The Removees looked on with interest and wonder as the combatants faced one another. Hazeldene was appearing in such a new light that they could not get used to it yet. In all the Remove there was no one but Bob Cherry who knew anything hitherto, of that better side of Hazeldene's nature, and Bob Cherry was not there. A ring of interested and amazed faces looked on as the cad of the Remove faced Bulstrode.

Bulstrode began with a savage attack, which was intended to send his adversary flying; but he found that his task was not so easy as he had flattered himself that it would be. Hazeldene had never been known to fight if he could help it, but he knew how to box, and he was no weakling. Some of Bulstrode's blows came home, but most were guarded, and Hazeldene put in several smart counters.

"By Jove!" murmured King, in utter wonder. "The fellow can fight!"

Hazeldene certainly could fight. Had the foes been anything like equally matched physically, the cad of the Remove would probably have won. But it was not so, and Bulstrode was pretty certain to pull off the victory, if only by sheer weight and size!

Finding that he could not carry it all his own way by his rushing tactics, the bully of the Remove took matters more calmly, and brought science to his aid, and then his strength and his length of reach gave him a fatal advantage.

Twice Hazeldene went down heavily under savage blows, and each time he came up to the scratch again, looking more and more "groggy."

Three rounds had been fought when Hazeldene fell for the second time, and then he gasped painfully when time was called, and he sat to rest on the knee Harry Wharton made for him.

"Are you done?" asked Harry.

Hazeldene gritted his teeth.

"Not unless he gives me the locket."

Harry glanced across at Bulstrode. The latter seemed to be little the worse for the encounter so far. He was breathing rather quickly, and rubbing a bruise on his cheek. He was plainly in much better form than Hazeldene.

"Will you give up the locket now, Bulstrode?" said Harry.

Bulstrode laughed scoffingly.

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"No, I won't!"

Hazeldene rose to his feet at the call of time.

"I'm going on, then."

The fourth round was all in Bulstrode's favour. He hit out with left and right, and almost every blow came home on Hazeldene's face, and the latter's counters were feeble and ineffective.

At the end of the round Hazeldene lay gasping on the earth.

Harry Wharton bent over him. Two or three fellows moved forward to lend a helping hand, and Hazeldene was placed in a sitting posture on Wharton's knee, and Harry wiped his hot face.

"Better give it up," he whispered. "You can't go on."

Hazeldene shook his head without speaking.

"You've got no chance left."

"I'm going on, though."

"Time!" called out Trevor.

Hazeldene staggered to the line. Bulstrode faced him with a savage grin. At the first blow Hazeldene reeled, and as he reeled, Bulstrode's left came up in a savage upper-cut, and he was fairly lifted off his feet and hurled to the ground. He went down with a bump like a sack of coal.

"One, two, three, four—!"

Hazeldene made a wild effort to rise. But he sank back again. He could not stand upon his feet, let alone continue the fight. It was no wonder. That last blow would have knocked out the biggest fellow in the Sixth!

"Finished?" grinned Bulstrode. "My hat! He asked for it, and now he's got it!"

"I'm not done!" groaned Hazeldene. "I'll fight you till you give me my locket!"

Bulstrode laughed mockingly.

"You shall have the locket, my pippin, but I am going to keep the photograph."

"Shame!" murmured several voices. "Give him the photograph! It's his!"

"I won't give it him," he said deliberately, "and if there's a fellow in the Remove that can make me, let him come here and do it!"

The bully's challenge was followed by a grim silence.

Bulstrode had not won his position as head of the roughest Form at Greyfriars without many a rough and tumble combat, in which he had proved his ability to hold his own, and a little more. And the sight of Hazeldene stretched, exhausted, and beaten on the earth, was not encouraging to any champion to offer himself.

Bulstrode looked round the ring of faces, with a cold sneer upon his lips. He knew his power. He had presumed on it too often not to know it well enough.

"I'm going to keep the photograph," he repeated, "if only to punish Hazeldene for his confounded cheek!"

"You're not!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, springing to his feet, from the side of the gasping Hazeldene. "You're not going to keep it, Bulstrode."

Bulstrode gave him a glare.

"What have you got to say about it, Wharton?"

"This much!" cried Harry passionately. "That you're a cad, and a blackguard to keep the locket, and that if you won't give it up, I'll make you, or have a jolly good try!"

"Bravo!" cried two or three voices.

Bulstrode sneered savagely.

"You'd better try, then," he exclaimed, "for I'm not going to give it up! My word! I'll teach you to cheek me like this!"

His clenched fist flew out, but Harry Wharton stepped back and avoided the blow. Hazeldene staggered to his feet. Harry Wharton tore off his jacket, and threw it to the defeated junior. He rolled back his sleeves, and faced Bulstrode with clenched fists and flashing eyes.

"Now I'm ready for you, Bulstrode!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the matter here?"

It was a well-known, cheery voice, as Bob Cherry, with Nugent and Bunter at his heels, burst upon the scene.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bob Cherry Takes a Hand.

"MIND your own business, Cherry," snarled Bulstrode, "and keep back out of the way, confound you!"

"Keep your wool on, kid!" said Bob Cherry coolly. "I can see there's a little rumpus on, but there's no need to break your neck about the matter, you know. Are you going to fight this rotter, Wharton?"

"Yes."

"Then you'll want a second."

"That's my business," said Nugent, stepping forward quickly. Harry gave him a rapid glance, and Nugent

"KIDNAPPED!"

Another Tale of Harry Wharton and his Chums,
by FRANK RICHARDS.

NEXT
TUESDAY.

coloured. "I'm glad I've come back in time," he said in a low voice.

Wharton nodded without speaking.

"Oh, come on!" growled Bulstrode impatiently. "Are you going to keep me here all the afternoon, Wharton?"

"I am ready."

"Time!" called out Trevor, watch in hand.

The two adversaries toed the line.

"Go it, ye cripples!" said Bob Cherry.

And they "went it" with a vengeance. Bulstrode was in the vilest of tempers, and just in the humour to wreak his wrath on the first victim that came to hand. He meant to give Harry Wharton a terrible thrashing, then and there, under the old Greyfriars elms, the scene of many an encounter between rival champions. But, strange to say, the feeling of the Remove, usually dead against Harry, had veered round, and there was now hardly a fellow on the spot who would not have been glad to see him lick the bully of the Form.

Hazeldene leaned against a tree, breathing hard, exhausted and full of aches and pains. He had never had such a thorough thrashing in his life before, and as he usually contrived to avoid fistic encounters, it was new to him, and therefore additionally painful. His eyes were gleaming with impotent rage and spite as he watched Bulstrode. He hoped, but without much expectation of seeing his hope realised, that the bully of the Remove would meet his match in Harry Wharton.

But Bulstrode, when he attempted to carry off the matter with a savage rush and a hot attack, found that he was meeting a foe very different from Hazeldene.

Harry Wharton had steadily practised with the gloves since coming to Greyfriars, and though he had been licked once by Bob Cherry, he had improved wonderfully since then, and was now no mean foe for any member of the Remove.

Then Bulstrode, powerful fellow as he was, had been to some extent fatigued by the fight with Hazeldene, and so was not in the best of condition.

Harry Wharton stood out the first round without receiving a tap, while his fists came home twice or thrice on the features of Bulstrode.

He had had decidedly the best of it by the time a rest was called, and Nugent patted him approvingly on the shoulder when the round ended.

"Good!" he said laconically. "Keep that up, and you'll do."

"By Jove, rather!" said Bob Cherry. "You've picked up wonderfully since—" He broke off with a laugh.

Harry Wharton finished the sentence for him.

"Since the time you licked me in the gym.," he said.

"Well—yes."

"Perhaps I should give a different account of myself now."

"Perhaps," said Bob Cherry carelessly. "I suppose you don't want to try! My word, what a giddy warrior you are! Isn't one fight on your hands enough at a time?"

Harry laughed, and as time was then called, he turned to face his foe again. During the first round Nugent and Cherry had learned the cause of the fracas from Russell, and Nugent was glad to learn it. Harry had found himself in many a "row" since coming to Greyfriars, owing to his peculiar temper, but there was no doubt that in the present instance he was quite in the right, and had the sympathy of the Form upon his side.

"I shouldn't wonder if he pulled it off, Nugent," remarked Bob Cherry, as he watched the progress of the second round. "He's getting as much as Bulstrode of the hitting. By Jove, there goes Bulstrode!"

A clever upper-cut from Harry had sent the bully of the Remove reeling.

He was helplessly exposed to attack, and Harry Wharton could have followed up the blow with right and left, and stretched his foe upon the earth; but he did not. He stepped back, his hands dropping to his sides, waiting for Bulstrode to recover himself.

There was a murmur among the Removeites at this. It was chivalry; but an excess of chivalry was out of place in

a fight with a bully like Bulstrode. And the latter showed little thanks for the grace. He recovered himself quickly, and rushed at Wharton, with a grim, savage look on his bruised face. Thick and fast came his blows—so rapid and so powerful that Wharton's guard was fairly beaten down, and then a heavy fist came like a lump of iron on his mouth.

Dova went Harry, as if he had been shot, hitting the ground with a bump that could have been heard twenty yards away.

"Time!" called out Trevor.

Bulstrode gave a snarl of disappointment.

The call of time came opportunely to save Harry from utter defeat, for Bulstrode would not have followed his adversary's generous example.

Nugent helped Wharton to his feet.

Harry was looking dazed, and there was a trickle of red from the corner of his mouth. Nugent made a knee for him, and Harry sank upon it with a gasp.

Bob Cherry shook his head solemnly.

"It won't do, kid," he said; "you mustn't spare a chap like Bulstrode. It's no good being decent with him! Go for him, as hard and as often as you can, and you'll knock him out. That's the only way."

Harry Wharton nodded.

Nugent wiped the blood from his mouth, and he seemed fairly recovered at the end of the minute rest.

Bulstrode was grinning as he faced Wharton for the third round.

He had some doubts at first, but now he was quite certain of victory, and he pressed his enemy hard.

And Nugent and Bob Cherry gave up the hope of seeing Wharton win now, as they saw Bulstrode driving him round the ring, and getting in blow after blow with hardly a counter in return.

Bob's cheery face assumed a glum expression.

"He's done in, Nugent," he whispered. "He won't last longer than this round."

Nugent nodded gloomily.

"But Bulstrode is not going to have it all his own way," said Bob Cherry, with a determined expression about his mouth. "He is not going to keep Hazeldene's locket, unless he wants a third fight on his hands."

"And a fourth!" grinned Nugent.

"Right-ho! It's time somebody dropped on him heavy, and gave him a lesson," agreed Bob. "It's a caddish trick to take Hazeldene's locket, and he sha'n't keep it."

There was a sudden shout from the Remove.

Harry Wharton had rushed in and delivered a heavy drive, taking advantage of a tempting opening; but it had been only a feint. Bulstrode's left swept his arm up, and Bulstrode's right came out like a battering ram.

It was a terrible blow, and it carried Harry Wharton fairly off his feet, and flung him back to the ground.

"Now," said Bulstrode, between his teeth, "do you want any more?"

Nugent helped up his chief. Harry was looking stunned, and evidently was quite unable to go on. Time was called, and he was still gasping on Nugent's knee.

Bulstrode was pretty well winded, and considerably bruised, but he was grinning with satisfaction. He had proved the victor in two fights in succession, and more firmly than ever his position as cock of the Remove was established.

"Any more coming on?" he asked vauntingly.

Bob Cherry stepped quietly forward.

"Yes," he said.

Bulstrode stared at him.

"What do you want, Cherry?"

"I want you to give Hazeldene his locket."

"I'm not going to do anything of the kind."

"Then I'll make you."

Bulstrode gritted his teeth.

"Stand back, Cherry! If you want a fight, I'll fight you to-morrow. I'm not fit now. I appeal to all the fellows."

"That's right enough," said King. The rest were silent.

Bob Cherry shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't want a fight," he said. "If you want one, I am ready to meet you to-morrow, or any other time. What

Do Not Forget The Order Form.



Hazeldene was utterly exhausted and panted like an overwrought animal, as he crouched there in the shadow of a huge trunk.

I want is for you to give Hazeldene back his locket, and if you don't do it, I'll make you!"

"I won't, confound you!"

Bob Cherry threw off his jacket.

"Very well; we'll see about that. Put up your hands!"

"I tell you I won't fight you now."

"I don't care whether you fight me or not; you are going to give up that locket, or else I shall take it by force."

Bulstrode, with a savage look, threw the locket on the ground at his feet.

"There it is, hang you," he cried, "and remember I'll make you suffer for this, Bob Cherry."

And he dragged on his jacket, and strode sulkily away. Bob Cherry, quite unmoved by the threat of the bully of the Remove, picked up the locket, and tossed it to Hazeldene, who received it eagerly enough.

Bob put on his jacket. Hazeldene helped him, apparently for once in his life desirous of being obliging. The Removeites dispersed from the spot, the excitement being over. The "ragging" of Hazeldene had been tacitly abandoned. It was felt that he had received punishment enough at the hands of Bulstrode, and besides, the contempt the Remove fellows felt for him was mingled now with something of respect.

"I say, Cherry, I'm much obliged to you!" muttered Hazeldene.

Bob Cherry nodded carelessly enough.

"I mean it, Cherry," said the cad of the Remove eagerly. "I do really! I wish I could do something to prove it!"

"Oh, you can, if you like," said Bob. "Be a little less of a soapy rotter, you know, and I'll call it quits."

Hazeldene smiled a sickly smile, and Bob Cherry walked away with Nugent and Wharton.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Bob Cherry does some Shopping.

"COME in, Cherry!"

It was Nugent who spoke, as the three juniors came along the passage, and arrived at the door of Study No. 1.

"Yes, do come in!" said Harry Wharton.

"Right-ho!" said Bob cheerily.

And they went in together. Billy Bunter was already there, and he had the fire nicely going, and the tea-kettle singing away on the trivet.

"I say, you fellows, I thought I'd get the place ready for tea, you know," he remarked. "I want you to let me stand you a tea."

Nugent gave a gasp of astonishment.

"You, Billy! You stand anybody anything! Have you received that famous postal-order, then, or is the world coming to an end?"

Billy Bunter blinked at him through his big spectacles with an air of great dignity.

"I really don't see why I shouldn't stand you fellows a feed sometimes," he said. "I've had tea with you quite a number of times this term. I don't see why you should refuse my treat when it comes round."

"Certainly not!" Nugent hastened to assure him. "We won't refuse!"

"Good! Then when my postal-order comes——"

"Hasn't it come yet?"

"N-no, there's been some delay. I can't quite make it out——"

"But how are you going to stand us a feed this afternoon, then?"

"I wasn't speaking about this afternoon," explained Billy. "I meant that I want you fellows to let me stand you a tea as soon as I am in funds, because I'm going to ask you to ask me to tea to-day, you see."

Nugent burst into a roar of laughter.

"I believe you'll be the death of me yet, Billy, you and your postal-order!" he exclaimed. "Never mind, you're a useful little animal—"

"Oh, I say, Nugent!"

"Yes, you are, Billy, and you shall have tea with us as often as you like. Still, if you want to stand us something, you shall stand us a basin of hot water and a sponge to rub down Wharton's chivvy."

"Certainly, Nugent! I'll get them at once!"

And the obliging Billy soon ferretted out the required articles, and Harry Wharton began to give his battered countenance a much-needed sponging. Bob Cherry looked round the cosy study regretfully.

"My word," he remarked, "I wish I had my quarters here with you kids! I'm stuck up the passage with two fellows I don't pull very well with. I'd like to change with Bulstrode."

"Good idea!" said Nugent eagerly. "I wish we could get you in this study in the place of Bulstrode, Cherry. It would be a change for the better—eh, Harry?"

"Yes, rather!" said Wharton, with unusual cordiality.

"I wonder if it could be fixed?" Bob Cherry remarked thoughtfully. "Bulstrode wouldn't change to oblige us, of course."

"Not much! The brute would stick all the tighter if he thought he was worrying us!" said Nugent, with a shake of the head.

"He might be made to believe he would be more comfy in another study, though," said Bob Cherry, with a glimmer of fun in his eyes. "There's more ways of killing a cat than choking it with cream, you know. But never mind that now. I don't suppose Bulstrode will worry us for a bit. The question before the meeting now is about tea. Got anything in the cupboard?"

"Yes, a little; nothing special, you know; and really we ought to have something special to celebrate this occasion!"

"Do you feel up to a feed, Wharton?"

Harry smiled rather feebly through the water that was running down his face. The dark bruises showed up clearly on the white skin.

"Well, not exactly," he said. "That chap Bulstrode hits like a battering-ram, and I can't say I feel up to anything now, except perhaps a cup of tea."

"That's what I thought. You can make the tea, Billy."

"Certainly, Cherry!"

"We'll have a feed this evening," said Bob. "What do you say to clubbing together and doing the thing in really decent style? If we stand five bob each, we can get up a really ripping feed, and enough for four."

"I'll stand my whack, too, Cherry!" said Billy Bunter, blinking through the steam of the kettle as he made the tea. "I shall have my postal-order by the next post—"

"Never mind your whack, Billy, we'll treat you!"

"Not at all, Cherry. I'm not a fellow to sponge on anybody, you know. If my postal-order comes by the next post I shall insist upon standing my whack."

"Right-ho, you shall, if the postal-order comes!" grinned Bob. "Otherwise, we shall have to do the shopping on fifteen bob, if you fellows like the idea."

"Rather!" said Nugent. "What do you say, Harry?"

"Good!"

"Then it's settled," said Bob Cherry. "Let's have tea, and then I'll go and do the shopping and send the things up to the study here. I suppose we had better feed here, and not in my study. Four are enough for a feed."

"Rather!" said Nugent. "Bring the Tommy up here, and we'll have a good time after prep. Two lumps of sugar for me, Billy."

Harry Wharton looked all the better for the wash, but his face was very bruised and out. The four juniors had tea together, and a cheerful meal it was. Harry was in considerable pain, but it was his way to bear that quietly, and, as a matter of fact, his companions did not know how much he was hurt. He was cheerful enough over tea, and nothing was said about the disagreement of the morning. In spite of hot words and even blows that had passed between them the three juniors felt themselves drawn together. Each recognised sterling qualities in the others, and it seemed to be just in the fitness of things that they should be friends. Probably more than one storm still lay ahead in wait for them; but it was probable that their friendship would grow all the same, and become a lasting one.

Bulstrode looked into the study while the four were at tea. He scowled at them and did not come in. Although he had

proved the victor in the combats under the old Greyfriars elms, he was feeling very much the effects of the fighting, and was in little better condition than Harry Wharton. Morose as his temper now was, he did not feel in form for a row, and so he let the juniors take their tea undisturbed in Study No. 1.

At Greyfriars, as at many public schools, there was a "tuck-shop" kept within the school precincts, open to the boys at certain hours of the day. Thither went Bob Cherry, and with him went the eternally obliging Billy Bunter, to carry the parcels.

Bob Cherry looked over the stock in the school shop with the eye of a connoisseur. He knew what he wanted, and he was an experienced shopper, in the "tuck" line at all events. The goods sold at the school shop were not equal in quality to those obtainable in the village, but convenience in the matter of shopping was a great thing. It was now close on locking-up, and it would have been impossible to go down to the village and return before the gates were closed for the night. And it was a serious matter for a junior to be absent from calling-over at Greyfriars.

Bob Cherry, with the consciousness that he had good money in his pocket, allowed himself the privilege of examining everything in the shop before he made his purchases, but he finally completed them; and Billy Bunter was delighted with their extent. Billy could wield a sturdy knife and fork, and Bob Cherry was certainly managing this feed in style.

"You can take that little lot up to the study," said Bob Cherry, when Billy was laden in all his pockets and under both arms with parcels. "I'll carry the rest."

"Certainly, Cherry!"

As he marched off towards Study No. 1 he met Bulstrode. The bully of the Remove looked at him curiously.

"Hallo! Where are you taking all those things?" he asked, eyeing Billy Bunter's cargo with amazement.

Billy looked a little nervous.

"I'm taking them along to the study," he said. "They belong to Cherry, Wharton, and Nugent. Please let me pass, Bulstrode."

Bulstrode grinned evilly.

"I've a good mind to chuck the lot over the banister, and you after them," he remarked.

Bunter backed away from him quickly.

"I say, Bulstrode, don't be a beastly bully, you know! They belong to Bob Cherry and Nugent and Wharton, and they'll be wild, you know. Bob Cherry's just coming up—"

Bulstrode scowled as he heard a footstep on the stairs. He stepped aside and allowed room for Billy Bunter to pass, which the Owl did with great relief. He scudded along to the study as fast as he could go.

But it was not Bob Cherry's footstep which Bulstrode had heard upon the stairs. Bob was settling the bill in the tuck-shop. As Bulstrode walked on he came face to face with Hazeldene, who was just coming upstairs.

Hazeldene shrank back a little. Bulstrode was about the last fellow at Greyfriars whom he desired to meet. Bulstrode grinned savagely at his evident uneasiness.

"You—you rotter!" he remarked. "You managed to sneak out of the ragging after all, but I'll see that you get it, you squirming toad! What are you nosing along here for? Your study's further up!"

"I—I was going to speak to Billy Bunter."

Bulstrode sniffed.

"You saw he was carrying the things for a feed—eh, and you thought you'd come on in that scene? I know you! Well, you won't! I'm giving a feed in Study No. 1, but you won't be there, I can tell you!"

Hazeldene's eyes glistened.

"Were those things for you?" he asked.

"Of course they were, and you won't taste a morsel!" jeered Bulstrode. "By Jove, I don't know why I don't sling you down the stairs—"

Hazeldene ran down the stairs as the bully made a movement towards him. Bulstrode burst into a laugh. He was still laughing as he walked away; an idea was in his mind which seemed to afford him considerable amusement.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Feed That Didn't Come Off!

SEVEN boomed out from the tower of Greyfriars, and Bob Cherry peeled off the boxing-gloves. Cherry, Wharton, and Nugent had been having a few rounds with the gloves on in the gym. Harry was feeling quite himself again now, and, with the conviction in his mind that he had not had his last encounter with Bulstrode, he was neglecting no opportunity of fitting himself for a harder tussle next time.

"Time!" said Bob Cherry cheerily.

Harry Wharton nodded and took off the gloves. It was the first time he had had them on with Bob since the time he had met the new boy in the gym, foot to foot, in earnest strife, and the recollection came oddly to his mind now. He was growing to like Bob Cherry, with his careless, frank ways, more than he had ever believed he would like any lad at Greyfriars.

"Right-ho!" said Nugent. "We've good time to finish prep., and then for the feed! Come along, kiddies!"

And the three juniors left the gym. The light was burning in Study No. 1 when they arrived there, and Billy Bunter was standing inside the open door, with an expression of astonishment on his face.

"First in the field, as usual when there's a feed about!" grinned Nugent. Then his tone changed as he caught sight of Billy's face. "What's the matter kid?"

Billy blinked at him without replying. Bob Cherry shook him by the shoulder.

"Don't do that, Cherry. You'll make my glasses fall off, you know."

"What's the matter with you? What are you blinking at, Owl?"

"It's the grub, you know!"

"What about the grub?"

"It's gone!"

There was a moment of deathly silence in the study—silence that might have been felt. Then:

"GONE!" yelled the three voices at once.

"Yes, gone!"

"What do you mean? Where has it gone?"

"I don't know," blinked Billy. "But it's gone. I've only just got here myself, you know, a minute or two ago. Then I looked into the cupboard, and the grub was gone!"

"But—but it can't be gone!"

Bob Cherry crossed to the cupboard and gazed into it. The provisions certainly were gone. They had been packed away neatly enough there, and had filled up most of the cupboard. Now it was nearly empty!

The grub, as Billy Bunter expressively put it, was gone.

The juniors stared at one another in dismay.

"Somebody's raided our blessed grub!" ejaculated Bob Cherry, at last.

"Perhaps it's been hidden somewhere about the study, for a joke," suggested Nugent. "Have you looked, Billy."

"No; I haven't had time yet. I was so flabbergasted—"

"Let's look, then," said Bob Cherry.

They hunted through the study. A terrific whoop from Bob Cherry announced the discovery of the missing provender. Wharton and Nugent hastened to him.

"My only hat!" gasped Nugent.

The provisions were found—Bob Cherry was staring into the coal-locker, and there they were! There they were—but utterly ruined! Pots of jam and marmalade were broken and mingled with coal-dust, sausages, opened tins of sardines, jars of preserved fruits, cakes and biscuits and chocolates, all were mixed in a ghastly mess along with coal and cinders.

It was a scene of havoc that might have made a Red Indian weep. The splendid feed, which had cost the juniors fifteen shillings in hard cash, was utterly done for. And fifteen shillings was a considerable sum to boys in the Remove.

Bob Cherry stared at the ruin with mouth agape.

"My hat!" he gasped, at last. "We're done this time—but who's done it? That's what we want to know! Who was the funny merchant who has played this jape on us?"

"We'll find him out," said Wharton, between his teeth. And Nugent's eyes blazed.

"By Jupiter, we will!" he exclaimed. "I could forgive a raid, even if they collared all the grub and scoffed it; but to destroy good food like this—why, it's beastly!"

"Beastly isn't the word for it," said Bob Cherry. "It's ghastly! Horrible! Murderous! All that grub gone—Oh, it's too wicked for words!"

"But who can have done it?" said Wharton. "Was it Bulstrode, do you think?"

Bob Cherry shook his head.

"No; I should have thought so at once, but I remember he came into the gym, at the same time we did, and he was still there when we left."

"Ah, that settles that!" said Nugent. "It's a fact. It wasn't Bulstrode. It's just like a trick that Vaseline would play; but surely he wouldn't serve us like this, after what you fellows did for him to-day?"

Bob Cherry gritted his teeth.

"If he has—" he began. But Billy Bunter interrupted him excitedly.

"That reminds me, kids!" he exclaimed. "About twenty minutes ago, when I was in the common-room, Hazeldene came in, and one of the fellows asked him if he had been making up a fire with his hands, because there was coal-dust on them."

"My hat! There you are!"

"It was Vaseline!"
"The—the young scoundrel! After what we did for him, too!" cried Nugent. "Why, the ungrateful brute ought to be scragged!"

"And he will be!" said Bob Cherry quietly. "I don't think we're the kind of fellows to take a thing like this lying down. Go and see if Hazeldene's in his study, Billy."

"Certainly, Cherry!"

And Billy Bunter scuttled importantly away. He returned in less than a minute to report that Hazeldene was in his study, and alone.

"He chucked a book at me when I opened the door," said Billy. "It caught me a cosh on the boko."

"Come along, then," said Bob Cherry. "We'll make him come here and see this mess, and own up if he did it. Then—"

He did not finish, but his look was ominous. Billy Bunter followed the three into the passage. He was rubbing his nose vengefully.

"That's right, Cherry! He caught me a cosh on the boko—"

The juniors hurried along to the door of Study No. 3, and threw it open without the preliminary of knocking. Hazeldene started up in alarm at the sight of three angry juniors bursting into his room.

"What—what—what do you want?" he stammered.

"We want you," said Bob Cherry grimly.

"But what—what—"

"Come along to our study."

"Certainly, I don't mind; but—but is Bulstrode there?"

"No. Bulstrode isn't there."

"Then I don't mind. You needn't hold my collar; I'll come."

"I think I'll make sure of you," remarked Bob Cherry; and, keeping a tight grip upon Hazeldene's collar, he marched him out of the study, and along the passage, and in at the door of Study No. 1, Wharton and Nugent following.

Hazeldene wriggled in Bob Cherry's grip, but he did not struggle to escape. He knew that that was useless. Wharton closed the door, and Bob Cherry's hand slid from Hazeldene's collar, and he pointed to the coal-locker.

"Look there, you beast!"

Hazeldene looked.

"Did you do that?"

"Yes."

The open, unhesitating avowal, which they had been far from expecting, amazed the juniors. They stared at Hazeldene in silence for a minute.

"You did it, did you?" exclaimed Bob Cherry at last.

"Yes. What does it matter to you?"

"Matter to me?" howled Bob. "What does it matter to me, when I blued fifteen bob on that grub?"

Hazeldene uttered a sharp ejaculation.

"What are you talking about? It wasn't your grub!"

"Wasn't it? It was ours. We three paid for it, at all events."

"You three—yours?"

"No gammon, kid!" said Bob Cherry. "It's no good trying to make us believe that you didn't know it was ours."

"Not much!" said Nugent emphatically.

"I—I swear it, honour bright!" exclaimed Hazeldene hoarsely. "Do you think I would play you such a trick, after what you did for me to-day?"

"Well, we thought it pretty low-down, even for you," said Bob Cherry, beginning to think that Hazeldene might be telling the truth. "But do you mean to say that you thought this tommy belonged to somebody else?"

"I thought it belonged to Bulstrode."

"Bulstrode!"

"Yes. He told me that he was giving a feed here to-night; and I saw Billy Bunter bringing in the things, and Bulstrode said they were his."

Bob Cherry gave a whoop.

"You utter idiot! They were ours."

"I suppose so, as you say so, but I never thought he was rotting. I don't see what he wanted to lie about it for. I waited till the study was empty, and then came in and banged the grub into the coal-locker. I did it to be even with him. I wouldn't have done it if I had known it belonged to you fellows."

There was an unusual earnestness in Hazeldene's look and voice, and the juniors could not help but believe him.

"You are such a fearful fabricator!" Bob Cherry remarked. "But I suppose you are telling the truth this time?"

"I swear I am!" said Hazeldene eagerly.

"Of course, it's plain enough why Bulstrode led you to think that the grub was his," Nugent remarked. "The rctter knew you would do something of this sort for revenge

upon him, and that's his way of trying to get square with us."

"I—I see it now."

"But the question is, what's going to be done?" said Bob Cherry. "There's all the grub gone to pot, and the school shop has been closed this hour, and they have strict orders from the Head not to open after hours to anybody."

Nugent nodded gloomily.

"The feed's a goner."

"I say, you fellows, you'd better put Vaseline through it, you know, for mucking up the feed," Billy Bunter remarked.

"He didn't know it was ours, Billy."

"Well, he's an awful liar, you know—aren't you, Vaseline? And, anyway, it's a sin to muck up good grub like that; and then he caught me a cosh on the boko—"

"Hang your boko! What are we going to do?" said Bob Cherry. "There's fifteen bob gone to rack and ruin; and even if we could raise the funds, there's no way of getting a new feed. And I was purposely sparing at tea-time, so as to leave plenty of room for it. It's too beastly rotten, you know."

"Can't be helped," said Wharton. "We shall have to have a feed some other time, that's all. We're done in this time."

Bob Cherry shook his head.

"That's all very well," he said; "but we were looking forward to a feed to-night. Can you suggest anything, Vaseline, you funny lunatic?"

"Yes, I think so," said Hazeldene.

"Go ahead, then!" said Bob Cherry tersely.

"If you can raise the funds—"

"I dare say we could manage the tin; but the school shop's closed, and the gates are locked."

"I will break bounds, if you like, and go down to the village and bring it in."

Bob Cherry stared at him in amazement.

"You're joking, I presume?"

"No, I'm not. I'll go down to the village, if you like, and get the grub," said Hazeldene resolutely.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Catching the Culprit.

BOB CHERRY looked keenly at the cad of the Remove. Hazeldene was evidently in earnest, but Bob did not quite understand it. To break bounds after dark at Greyfriars meant a flogging in the case of discovery, and Hazeldene, more than any other fellow in the Remove, shrank from such an infliction.

He never could bear pain, and there was hardly any meanness he would not have been guilty of to avoid it. Yet here he was offering to take a risk which the others would have seriously reflected upon before facing.

"I can't quite make you out, Vaseline," said Bob Cherry at last. "Do you really mean that you will go down to the village, out of bounds?"

"Yes."

"You know what it means if you're spotted."

"I shall be careful."

"There's time to do it," Bob Cherry remarked thoughtfully. "Of course, you ought to be the one to go, after smucking up our grub like that, and I think I sha'n't believe you till you've been put to the test, too."

"Put me to the test, then."

"What do you say, you chaps?"

"I think it's a jolly good idea, you fellows," said Billy Bunter, before the others could speak. "It would be too awful to miss a feed we've counted upon. You see, we might have another feed to-morrow, but it wouldn't be the same. We might have the one to-morrow, anyway. We should always have a feeling that we were one feed behind, as it were."

Bob Cherry laughed.

"Oh, dry up, Billy! You make me feel hungry when you talk about grub."

"That's all very well, Cherry—"

"What do you think, Wharton, and you, Nugent? Shall we let Vaseline go down to the village shop for a new supply? He could get it in by the time we were finished our prep., if he really goes."

"I mean to really go," said Hazeldene.

"I don't see why not," said Nugent. "He certainly ought to do it, after the way he's spoiled our feed, and we've let him off for it."

"Quite right!" said Harry Wharton.

"But," Nugent continued, "it's not much use deciding for or against, as I feel pretty certain that Vaseline will never have the pluck to do it."

"I'll show you."

"You'd better show us, then," grinned Nugent. "My

belief is that he'll come squirming back, and say he can't manage it."

"Very likely," said Billy Bunter. "I say, you fellows, if he does, we ought to rag him, you know, and make—"

"Let him try, at all events," said Bob Cherry. "Now, it's a question of raising the wind. I'm afraid I can only stump up to the tune of three bob."

Nugent felt in his pockets.

"Two-and-threepence," he said, turning the contents out on the table. "How are you fixed, Harry?"

Wharton smiled.

"I think I can make it up all right," he remarked. "My uncle has at least one good point—he keeps me well supplied with tin. Here you are."

"By Jove, you are well fixed!" Bob Cherry remarked, as Harry Wharton turned out a half-sovereign and a dozen silver coins.

"Better make it up to the fifteen bob again," said Nugent, "and we'll square up our whack afterwards, Harry."

"That's all right."

And fifteen shillings were handed over to Hazeldene. He slipped the money into his pocket.

"Mind you don't lose it," said Billy Bunter. "If you come back and say you've lost it, we shall know that you only funk going to the village—"

"Shut up, Billy!"

"But, I say, Bob Cherry—"

"Don't bother! We'd better go down and help Vaseline over the wall, kids, if he's really going," Bob remarked.

The others assented, and the four left the study, leaving the Owl behind. Hazeldene was unusually quiet. He started as he met Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, in the passage. Wingate did not even look at him, but the sight of the captain brought home to his mind the risk he was running.

Bob Cherry grinned as he saw Hazeldene's face change.

"What price breaking bounds now?" he murmured.

"I am going," said Hazeldene.

"By Jove, he's sticking it out!" said Bob Cherry. "I shouldn't wonder if the beggar has an ounce of pluck somewhere. He stood up to Bulstrode to-day, after all. I hope you'll bring it off, Hazeldene."

"Wait a minute while I get a bag out of my study."

"Right-ho!"

Hazeldene kept the bag under his arm as they left the house. It was a soft baize bag, and folded up into a small compass. When it was filled out with the goods from the village shop it would be a different matter, however. The juniors crossed the gloomy close to a well-known spot where the school wall was accessible.

"We'll be here to help you back over the wall," said Bob Cherry. "How long will it take you to get there and back?"

"About three-quarters of an hour, including the shopping."

"Good! We'll leave it till a quarter past eight, then. When the quarter chimes we'll be here waiting to help you in. No good hanging about, you know, or some beastly senior is sure to spot us, and get suspicious."

"I'll remember."

"And we'll yank the bag up to our study window with a cord," added Bob Cherry. "It would be remarked on if we carried it up the stairs."

"That's pretty certain," Nugent remarked.

"Now, up you go!"

Wharton and Cherry gave Hazeldene a bunk up the wall, and he caught the top and drew himself upon it.

"Remember, a quarter past eight!" whispered Bob Cherry.

"Right you are!"

And Hazeldene dropped on the outer side of the wall. They heard the thud of his feet in the road, and then there was silence. Hazeldene was gone upon his mission.

"Well, he's started, at all events," Bob Cherry remarked. "He's sticking it out well, so far. I wonder whether he'll get as far as the village?"

"More likely he'll lose his nerve and come back without the stuff," said Nugent, with a shrug of the shoulders.

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"It won't be much use if he does," he remarked. "We're not going to come here to help him in till a quarter past eight, and he can't get over the wall without assistance."

"I have an idea that he means business," Harry Wharton said quietly. "There's something decent in that chap, though he's an unspeakable rotter sometimes. I believe he will do what he has promised."

"Well, we shall see."

The juniors returned to the School House. As they came up to the study again, Bob Cherry suddenly seized his companions and stopped them,

"Look!" he whispered. The light was streaming out from Study No. 1 into the passage. It showed the shadow of a form standing just within the door, and even in the shadow there was no mistaking the burly figure and the broad shoulders.

"Bulstrode!" murmured Nugent. Bob Cherry nodded, with a mischievous grin. "He's gone to look at the muck Hazeldene has made of the feed," he whispered. "You see, he wasn't really sure that the wheeze would work. Now—"

"Come on!" muttered Harry Wharton. The chums of the Remove ran swiftly but silently along the passage. They looked into the study, but Bulstrode did not turn his head, not hearing their approach. The bully of the Remove was speaking to Billy Bunter.

"Hazeldene did it, did he?" he said. "Well, he has made a mess of it, and no mistake. Rather ungrateful, too, considering."

"He thought the stuff was yours, you know, Bulstrode," said Billy Bunter. "You told him it was, you know."

Bulstrode chuckled. "Did I? I dare say he thought something of the kind. Ha, ha, ha! What did Cherry and Wharton do with him?"

"They haven't done anything." "My word! Have they let him off? I wouldn't! I'd have snatched him bald-headed if the grub had been mine!" said Bulstrode. "By Jove, it does look an awful muck! Ha, ha, ha!"

"It does," agreed Billy Bunter, blinking through his big glasses. "I think you ought to clear it up, Bulstrode."

"Ha, ha, ha! Catch me!" "I think you ought. You are responsible. But who is that standing behind you, Bulstrode? Is it Cherry or Wharton?"

Bulstrode gave a gasp of alarm and whirled round. But there was no escape for him. The sturdy forms of the chums of the Remove blocked up the doorway.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "How do you do, Bulstrode? Come to see the fun—eh? Awfully funny thing that, isn't it?"

"Yes, rather funny," said Bulstrode. He looked uneasily at the three. They made no motion to move and let him pass, and Bulstrode did not wish to appear afraid; but he was very unquiet.

"Good joke!" agreed Bob Cherry. "Fifteen bobs' worth of good grub chucked away, and Vaseline very nearly licked for doing it, when he only did it because you had led him to believe that the stuff was yours."

"Oh, that chap's an awful liar!" said Bulstrode. "Why, I just heard you admit it to Billy Bunter."

"That he did!" said Billy. "I think he ought to clear up all that mess. I told him so. You must have heard me tell him so, you fellows."

"No fear!" said Bulstrode. "Dear me," said Bob Cherry, "I should have thought you would offer to clear all that out of the coal-locker, and carry it away somewhere!"

"Not much."

"But suppose," went on Bob Cherry blandly—"suppose the alternative were to have your classic features rubbed in it, Bulstrode, dear boy?"

Bulstrode made a movement to get through the doorway. Three sturdy forms closed up and stopped him there. He could not push through.

"Let me pass!" he exclaimed angrily. "Are you in a hurry?"

"Yes, I am. Get out of the way." "Can't be did, my son. You're going to clear all that muck out of the coal-locker first. Come, don't be in such a hurry to get out of your own study!"

"Let me pass, or—"

"Rats!"

Bob Cherry made a sign, and three pairs of hands seized the bully of the Remove. He struggled fiercely, but against such odds even the burly Bulstrode was powerless. He was dragged over to the coal-locker, and held there by Wharton and Nugent. His face went pale with horrid anticipation as he looked upon the sticky mess of coal-dust, marmalade, jam, preserves, and sardines. Bob Cherry drew upon his hands the pair of old gloves which the juniors used when they tidied the grate. Thus guarded, he fished out a handful of the sticky mess from the coal-locker.

Bulstrode wriggled frantically. "Don't you dare to touch me with that!" he shrieked. "I—ow—ooch!"

Taking not the slightest notice of his remonstrances, excited as they were, Bob Cherry lathered that terrible handful over his face.

Bulstrode's features disappeared under a sticky coating, and as his mouth was open at the time, he received a pleasant taste of coal and jam and sardines, beautifully mingled together.

"Ugh! Goo—grooh! Grooh!" "What is he talking about?" asked Bob Cherry. "That's

either Esperanto or Cherokee, I should imagine. Have some more, Bulstrode?"

"Goo—grooh!" "I suppose that means yes? Well, there's plenty."

And Bob Cherry ladled another handful upon Bulstrode's face, and smothered it over his features with a liberal hand. Bulstrode gasped and choked and wriggled, but it was of no avail. The juniors held him firmly while strict justice was done.

"Are you going to take away this muck now, Bulstrode?" "Gerr—oo—grooh! No."

"Will you have some more on your classic countenance, then?"

"Goo—gerooh!"

Another handful was smacked upon the bully's face, and rubbed well in. He squirmed and writhed frantically.

"Will you clear it up now, Bulstrode?"

"Yes!" yelled the unfortunate bully of the Remove. Bob Cherry chuckled.

"I thought he would listen to reason at last," he remarked. "There's a scuttle here you can use, Bulstrode. Get it all out of the coal-locker, and carry it away, and do what you like with it. Get a move on you! We've got our prep. to do to-night, and we can't waste much more time on your education."

"I'll—I'll—"

"Buck up, old fellow, unless you'd rather have some more on your chivvy."

They released Bulstrode. The spirit had quite been taken out of the bully of the Remove, and he obeyed Bob Cherry's directions without a murmur. The horrible compound in the coal-locker was taken out and placed in the scuttle by Bulstrode, while the chums stood round watching him, ready to give him another lesson if he showed fight. But he did not. He had had enough of that.

"Now you can take it away," said Bob Cherry, when he had finished. "You needn't trouble to bring the scuttle back now. I'd rather you cleaned yourself a bit before I see you again. You're not pretty to look at as you are."

"I'll—I'll—"

"Never mind all that now, kid. Your conversation's very interesting, but we've got our prep. to do. Travel, will you?"

Bulstrode, with a savage scowl under the thick lathering of stickiness, lifted the scuttle and made for the door.

The chums grinned after him as he departed. Never had the bully of the Remove received so profound a humiliation, and never had he more deserved one. He had expected that some punishment of this kind would fall upon Hazeldene, at the hands of the incensed chums, but justice had found out the right victim in a rather unexpected manner.

Several Removites met him in the passage, and stared at him in utter amazement. The news ran through the studies, and there was a rush of the Remove to look at Bulstrode. The unfortunate bully of the Form had to run the gauntlet of dozens of grinning faces, ere he slammed the scuttle down in a corner and escaped to a bathroom.

And when he had cleaned himself—a by no means rapid or easy task—he felt far too exhausted and used-up to think of coming to close quarters with the chums of the Remove again that evening. He vowed vengeance as he washed and washed, but he did not think of attempting to put it into execution at present. He had had enough of Cherry, Wharton, and Nugent for the time.

Bob Cherry closed the door of the study after the departing bully, and his laugh rang through the room. Nugent joined in it, and Billy Bunter cackled away for all he was worth. Even Wharton was laughing.

"My hat," ejaculated Bob Cherry, "I think Bulstrode has had a lesson this time! He won't be quite so ready to spoil a fellow's feast on another occasion."

"I should say not! Now let's get the prep. done, or we sha'n't be finished before Hazeldene gets back with the grub," said Nugent.

"Right you are! Shall I do mine in here with you?"

"Rather, old fellow!"

"There's room for three," said Harry. "Mine's done. And I don't suppose Bulstrode will give us a visit again for some time."

"Ha, ha! No; I fancy not."

Bob Cherry, Nugent, and Billy Bunter were soon hard at work. The preparation was got through in record time, and then Bob Cherry looked at his watch.

"What is it?" asked Nugent, yawning, as he pushed his books away.

"Ten minutes past eight."

"Time we were moving, then."

Bob Cherry rose from his chair. "You're right; let's get out! If Hazeldene is up to time, he'll be waiting for us at a quarter-past. You can stay here, Billy, while we're gone. You can put the room

tidy and shove the books away and lay the cloth, you know."

"Certainly, Cherry."

And, leaving Billy Bunter thus industriously occupied, the chums of the Remove quitted the study and the House, and made their way to the school wall at the spot where they were to wait for the return of Hazeldene.

The quarter chimed out from the school tower as they reached it.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Hazeldene Keeps His Word.

BOB CHERRY drew closer to the wall, and Nugent and Wharton helped him up. The darkness was thick under the trees, which grow close to the wall and shadowed the lane beyond.

Bob gained the top, and drew himself up astride of it. Then he gazed out into the shadowy lane.

There was no one in sight, but the gloom was too thick for him to see far. He listened in the silence of the night.

"Not there—eh?" came Nugent's whisper from below.

"Shut up! I think I can hear somebody," replied Bob.

The others were silent. Through the dimness of the lane came a sound of footsteps, and a dim form, with a bag hoisted upon its shoulder, came looming up from the gloom.

Bob gave a whistle. It was replied to by another from the shadowy figure, and the latter came to a halt under the wall, and placed the bag on the ground.

"Is that you, Vaseline?"

"Yes."

"Got the tommy?"

"Yes, rather! It's in the bag here."

"Then you've done it? I say, Nugent, here's Vaseline, and he's got the grub in the bag!"

"Hand it over, then," said Nugent.

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"But what about your giddy prognostications?"

"Hang my giddy prognostications! Get the grub in before some beastly prefect is down upon us and collars it!" growled Nugent.

"Right-ho!" Bob Cherry lowered a cord outside the wall. "Fasten that to the bag, Vaseline, and I'll pull it up!"

Hazeldene bent down and secured the cord to the bag.

"Pull away, Cherry!"

Bob Cherry pulled, and the bag came slowly up. He caught it in his hand, and lowered it to Nugent and Wharton. Harry took it, while Nugent prepared to help the climbers down.

The bag was well filled, and a good weight, and Hazeldene must have felt the weight of it during the long walk from the village, too.

"Give us your fn, Vaseline!" said Bob Cherry, leaning his chest on the wall, and reaching down his hands to Hazeldene.

The latter caught hold of him, and with Bob's assistance climbed the wall, and gained a grip on the top. Then he came lightly over, and dropped on the inner side of the wall, and Nugent caught him by the shoulder.

"Good for you, Vaseline!"

Bob Cherry dropped to the ground.

"What did I tell you, Nugent?" he exclaimed.

"Blessed if I know!" said Nugent. "What did you tell me?"

"Why, about Vaseline getting the grub all right!"

"That you didn't; it was Wharton who said he would manage it!"

"No good standing talking here," said Bob Cherry hastily. "You know the way the prefects have of nosing about the grounds. It would be rotten to be caught now. Get that bag to the house, and stop under the study window, Wharton, and—"

"S-h!" muttered Hazeldene.

There was a footstep in the Close close at hand, and a tall form loomed up in the darkness. Bob Cherry gritted his teeth. The danger had been nearer than he had thought for.

Harry Wharton thrust the heavy bag into Nugent's hand.

"Get that away!" he muttered. "You others cut off to the study. I'll stop that chap. I know who it is; it's Carberry, the prefect. Cut off!"

The voice of the prefect was heard the next moment.

"Hallo! Who's that whispering there? What are you doing out of the House at this time, you young rascals?"

"Cut it!" muttered Wharton.

The juniors found themselves obeying him. Nugent and

Cherry rushed the bag off to the wall under the study window, while Hazeldene made for Study No. 1 to let down the cord and pull it up.

The prefect had not seen who the juniors were in the darkness, but he realised that something was going on, and he came quickly towards them. Harry Wharton remained behind his chums. It was necessary to take some risk to save the provisions, which, of course, would have been confiscated if discovered, to say nothing of more serious consequences of the escapade.

"Who is that?" cried Carberry again.

He heard the retreating footsteps of the juniors, and was about to dash in pursuit, when a chunk of turf caught him in the neck.

Carberry gave a howl of rage. Carberry, the bully of the Sixth, was never very sweet-tempered, and he felt furious now. He made a dash in the direction whence the missiles came, and caught sight of a dim, fleeing figure.

"Stop, you young scoundrel!" he roared, springing in pursuit. "I know who you are!"

Harry Wharton smiled in the darkness as he ran. He knew very well that the prefect did not know who he was.

He dashed on, the heavy footsteps of the Sixth-Former clumping behind him, and growing nearer at every stride. But Harry was not at a loss. He dashed round the fountain in the close, and then, instead of running on, halted and crouched in the blackness in the shadow of the basin.

The heavy footsteps of the prefect came ringing by.

Harry Wharton crouched low, silent, his heart beating hard. Had the prefect suspected the ruse, Harry was under his very grasp; but, fortunately, Carberry's wits did not work very fast, and it did not occur to him that the fugitive had stopped. He blundered on in the darkness, and Harry, springing to his feet, ran back lightly and silently the way he had come.

He heard Carberry's voice in the darkness, and the returning steps of the prefect. Carberry had realised his mistake. But his chance was gone. Harry Wharton dashed away swiftly in the darkness, and in a minute more was in the School House, and ascending the stairs three at a time.

He ran along the passage and into Study No. 1. Bob Cherry and Nugent were already there. Hazeldene was closing the window. The bag, with the cord attached to it, lay on the floor.

"Here you are!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, with great relief. "We've only just got here. I was afraid the prefect had collared you. Nugent wanted to come and look for you."

"I gave him the slip," said Harry. "He hasn't the faintest idea who we are. It is all right."

Billy Bunter had the bag open now. He gave a crow of satisfaction as he turned the good things out.

"I say, this is really ripping!" he exclaimed. "It's better than the last lot, I really think. My word, Vaseline, you've done very well for fifteen bob, and no mistake!"

"By Jove, so he has!" said Bob Cherry. "And I'm just about hungry enough for a good feed, too!"

"Same here!" said Nugent. "How are you, Harry?"

"Hungry as a hunter!" said Wharton, laughing. "I— But where are you going, Hazeldene?"

Hazeldene had crossed quietly to the door, and opened it. He would have been gone in another moment. He looked back, colouring, as Harry called to him.

"I've done what I promised," he said.

"Yes, and now?"

"Now, good-night!"

"Rot!" exclaimed Bob Cherry warmly. "Now you're going to stay and join us, of course. Do you think we're going to let you go like that?"

"I didn't do it for that, Cherry; I went because—"

"I know all about that; but now you've done it, you're going to stay to the feed," said Bob Cherry, taking Hazeldene by the shoulders and whirling him willy-nilly into the study again, and then closing the door.

Hazeldene laughed.

"Well, if you really want me—"

"Of course we do!" exclaimed Bob.

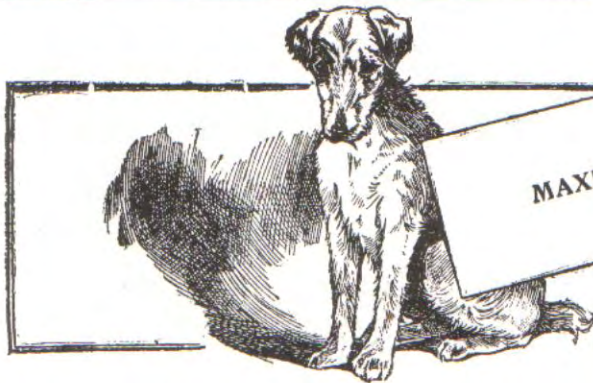
"Right-ho, then! That long walk has given me a jolly good appetite," said Hazeldene. "I'll join you with pleasure!"

And he did!

And one of the finest feeds the Greyfriars juniors had ever had was the one Hazeldene enjoyed in Study No. 1 with the chums of the Remove.

THE END.

(Another long, complete tale dealing with the further adventures of Harry Wharton, Nugent, Bob Cherry, and Hazeldene next Tuesday. Please order your copy of "The Magnet" Library in advance, Price One Halfpenny.)



NEW STORY SHOWING HOW TWO BOYS BECOME DETECTIVES.

By LEWIS HOCKLEY.

GLANCE OVER THIS FIRST.

Frank Dennis and Bob Lomax, two City clerks, are thrown out of employment. But Grip, their dog, finds a purse containing certain heirlooms, the owner of which the chums are fortunate in finding. They are well rewarded for their labour and decide to make the detective business their profession.

Their landlady does not like the idea of the chums being in uncertain employment, and consequently shows the spiteful side of her nature.

Robert and Frank decide to leave, and they pay up the bill.

One of Fortune's Queer Strokes.

Twenty minutes later Robert and Frank, all their worldly possessions packed into a couple of ancient bags they held, and with Grip, the terrier, sniffing wonderingly at their heels, found themselves walking along the street. Forty or fifty yards from Mrs. Williams' domicile they went, and then Dennis suddenly burst into a peal of hearty laughter. His friend looked round on him, somewhat surprised.

"Well," he observed, "what's the matter now?"

"We're sacked again!" Frank answered; and he laughed still more.

"Ay," Robert said, "we are; but we've got more money in our pockets this time than we had before!"

"Yes; thanks to you!"

"Thanks to Grip, you mean!" Lomax rejoined. "Didn't he find the purse?"

Somewhat aimlessly, the two young fellows made their way into Holborn, crossed over, and entered Staples Inn; the reason for going there being that it was the nearest place where they might find a free seat. And the bags they carried were not sufficiently light to keep a long perambulation with them from being uncomfortable.

"Well, old man," Dennis remarked, after the pair had sat some time in silence, "what is it you're thinking of? Some way of making a start as 'Maxennis, detective!' It's a rattling good idea, I'm quite sure, but I'm hanged if I can quite see how to make a beginning!"

"How did your magazine story detectives begin their careers?" asked Lomax, with a malicious smile curling his lips. He could not resist the opportunity of poking fun at his companion.

"Well, I don't know," Dennis answered, taking the question quite seriously; "they're generally full-blown detectives when one first hears about 'em. The writers don't seem to worry much over their beginnings!"

"No; and shall I tell you why?" demanded the Yorkshireman.

"Well?"

"Because those writers blessed well don't know anything about the business!"

"While we do," was Dennis's flippant remark.

"What we don't know we precious soon shall!" his chum returned grimly. "You and I, Frank, are going to see this thing through; we're both see-it-outers—or I'm a fool—and we'll win through all right, mark my words! Detective stories are all right, no doubt, but they're a precious sight too romantic; there's a good deal of cold, hard realism in the actual fact, as we'll see; it's not the fairy tale business that writers represent it!"

"But there is some romance and adventure," urged Dennis; "it isn't all dull and monotonous slaving, like quill-driving in a cheeseparer solicitor's office!"

"H'm!" grunted Lomax, whose nature was of the serious brand. "It's plain, honest, downright hard work!"

"Like finding that Yankee's purse, eh?" Dennis put in slyly. "Strikes me that was more in the romantic than the hard work line!"

"It isn't all like that," Lomax declared obstinately. "Real detective work isn't the comic opera rot one sees in books, or in the theatre. A chap who wants that sort of work has to find it just like other jobs; it doesn't fall down on him out of the skies. Now, I've thought of half a dozen different ways of starting Maxennis on his career."

"Let's hear one."

"Here you are," began Lomax confidently; "I'm not talking out of the back of my neck, I've been thinking this over; one way. We take an office, put 'Maxennis, detective,' on a board, or brass plate, and wait until someone comes to engage us."

"But I thought you said it was the sort of work," objected Dennis, "that one has to—"

"Shut up!" interrupted Lomax. "Plan number two. We put advertisements in some of the daily and evening papers, offering our services—"

"And plan number three," interrupted his chum. "We buttonhole likely-looking folks, ask 'em if there's any mystery they'd like solved; and when they say there is, as of course, they will, we wade in and do the trick!"

"Oh, shut up!" Lomax returned. "If you're going to act the giddy goat, Dennis—"

"But I'm not, old chap," Dennis broke in hurriedly. "Only one must have a bit of fun sometimes!"

"Strikes me you want to make fun of everything!" growled his chum. "You laugh—"

"Well, better than crying, isn't it? What is it you propose we shall do?"

"I'm thinking."

"First thing, I guess, is to find another lodging; unless we want to pass the night in the streets!"

"Might do worse than that. There's lots of queer things take place at night in the London streets—lots of queer things seen—and these are the things that might give us a helping hand for our start!"

"For my part," Dennis rejoined, "I prefer sleeping in a bed. I don't want to roost under a railway arch, or be shoved off a seat on the Embankment by some bobby!"

Dennis, as yet, had scarcely begun to take seriously the advent upon the world of "Maxennis, detective." He had Irish blood in his veins, although his birthplace was in the west of England, and the light side of things had a wonderful attraction for him. He could be serious enough when he pleased, but this was more often the outcome of necessity than of inclination. Yet, for all his frivolity, he was a clever and quick-witted fellow, with a rare stock of resolution and ability underlying his seeming shallowness and playful humour—a sterling, honest, dependable sort of chap—"real jannock," as Robert Lomax called him in the vernacular of his native place; and not only called him, but knew him to be so.

But Bob Lomax was very much in earnest; "Maxennis, detective," was to him something considerably more than an idea—it was a living actuality, shortly to be put into motion, and made to do something. He talked to Dennis with a grim, sober enthusiasm of what and how they should do; and Frank listened, until a furious barking, intermingled with a human voice raised in angry exclamations, interrupted them.

"By Jove, it's Grip!" exclaimed Dennis; and he swung round.

It was Grip doing the barking; the other performer in the vocal line was a woman occupying the next seat around the semi-circle of railed-in grass.

The two young fellows had been sitting in Staple Inn garden longer than they imagined, and long enough for Grip—who was not the most patient-tempered of fox-terriers—to feel that he had had enough of inaction, and required a little excitement. It was decidedly a new thing for him to be out thus, at this hour of the day, with his

masters—for Lomax and Dennis had a joint ownership in him—but after a while the novelty wore off.

While "Maxennis" had been engaged in conversation he had sat under the seat, his nose between his forepaws, pretending to be asleep, but in reality very much awake and alive to what was going on around him. His masters did not take any heed of him; so absorbed were they that when Grip, having caught sight of a big, tortoiseshell cat, who had walked out to sun herself on the steps, made a sudden rush in between their feet and started off to demolish puss, they were unaware of his act.

The cat escaped with a bad fright, and Grip, feeling more or less satisfied with himself, walked slowly back to the seat, his eyes watchful for further adventures. And as luck—whether ill or good may be a matter of opinion—would have it, he didn't have to wait long or go far.

On the seat next to that on which Lomax and Dennis sat, and about twelve feet from it, was seated a stout lady of uncertain age, with grey hair, a bonnet that looked as if it would fall off every time she nodded her head, a red face, an umbrella, and a leather reticule. This last possession she held in her hand, and, from the time of her sitting down, had been taking from it and reading with an expression of intense anxiety postcard after postcard. Picture postcards they were, but it seemed to be the address, rather than the view on the opposite side, which interested her. Each separate one she studied intently as she drew it out, and soon she had quite a respectable number piled up on the lap of her dress.

Suddenly there was a gust of wind, and the topmost card of the pile was lifted up and fluttered gently to the ground, six feet in front of her. It was at this moment that Grip, returning from his cat-chase and on the look-out for something to do, drew near. He saw the coloured piece of pasteboard settle on the ground, and he went for it.

The lady discovered her loss at the same time as the terrier made his find. She looked up, with a cry of alarm, to see Grip trying to raise the card with his nose in order to get his teeth to work upon it. She screamed. Grip, perceiving that it was he who was the objective of the alarming yell, put his paws on the card, looked at the owner, and barked defiantly.

"Shoo! Shoo! Go away, you horrid dog! Shoo! Shoo!" cried the lady, brandishing her fist.

But though Grip acknowledged the remark, he did not move.

"Be off! Be off! Get away from my card!" the lady exclaimed, her voice rising to a scream.

Grip barked, the lady shouted, and at last Grip's masters' attention was attracted. The lady had risen from her seat, intent upon securing her card, but Grip frustrated her; he had succeeded in picking up his find, and, just as Frank Dennis was getting up to see what was the trouble, the terrier ran to him, the card in his mouth. This he dropped at Frank's feet, looking up into his face and wagging his stump of a tail as much as to say "See what a clever fellow I am! Aren't you going to pat me?"

Dennis was looking at Grip, and Lomax had just picked up the card, when the owner swept up to their seat like a whirlwind.

"Give me my card—give me my card!" she vociferated. "What does your brute mean by stealing my card? Give it to me, I say; it's worth thousands of pounds—thousands!"

"I'm very sorry, madam," began Dennis apologetically. But his words were overwhelmed beneath a furious torrent of demands, protestations, and accusations, that left the speaker breathless and gasping.

What did they mean by setting the dog on her? Had they taught the horrid wretch to steal? Were they, too, in league with the wretches who were trying to drive a poor, defenceless woman into her grave and steal her money? She could see that they

were; it was no use them denying it! She would call the police; they should be given in charge! She would not be worried and frightened out of her life, if there was law and justice in England! They would see! If they thought they could threaten her into giving up her money, they were very much mistaken!

There were not many persons about, but such as were quickly gathered around the excited and voluble lady, who left no chance for either of the young men to get in edgewise a word of explanation or apology. As for Grip, the cause of the sudden disturbance, he had retreated under the seat, whence he was adding his own voice to the fearful clamour.

"Give me that card!" shrieked the lady; and she snatched away the coloured pasteboard which Lomax had held in his fingers.

"We're really awfully—"

But Lomax cut short his friend's utterance and got on his legs. Astonished as he was, he had kept his head cool; he had heard every word the lady had said, and a sudden inspiration came to him. Stepping quickly to the lady's side, in a low, hurried, awe-inspiring voice, he said:

"We are detectives, madam. You are in trouble of some sort. May we help you? There is no need to be frightened!"

Whether it was what he said; whether there was something in his face impressed the lady; or that in the excited condition of her mind she was unable to think or act normally, does not matter, but her manner underwent an entire change. The anger died out of her eyes, to be replaced by wonder, and then an expression of relief came into her face.

She stood undecided, the while the little crowd—composed mostly of boys—opened its eyes still wider.

Dennis had heard his chum's words, and he rose to the occasion, seconding him nobly. Quick-witted, he had divined what was in Bob's mind as much from a glance he had encountered as from his words.

"Yes, yes, madam, don't be alarmed," he said, springing forward and taking the old lady by the arm. "We're detectives, and, so far from being against you, will be very happy to help you if you'll let us! Sit down for a bit, and recover yourself, and then tell us all about it. The dog's all right, madam; he wouldn't hurt a fly!"

The lady's broad, red face showed hesitation and indecision in every line. She sat down, assisted by Dennis; and Lomax, with threatening gestures and hard words, drove the crowd of boys away, advising them not to come back unless they had a particular desire for very unpleasant consequences. Then the old lady, observing that "She was that flustered and put out, she really didn't know whether she was standing on her head or her heels; and her poor head was so shaky," dived into the reticule, and, producing a small, black flask, placed it to her lips, and sipped the contents.

Having declared faintly that though her nerves were all upset she was feeling a bit better, she turned to Lomax and observed: "So you young men are detectives?" "Yes," Dennis said hurriedly; "and if you'll entrust us with the matter that's worrying you, you'll find that we'll rid you of your trouble."

This last piece of information evidently touched the lady, for she immediately plunged into a long and complicated recital of her troubles, and, helped by further assistance from her flask, concluded that she might safely place herself in their hands. With this assurance, and a statement from Lomax that she was to consider them and their skill entirely at her service, the lady and the budding geniuses of the detective profession parted company for the time being.

(Another long instalment of this splendid detective tale next Tuesday. Please order your MAGNET Library in advance.)

For Next Week

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Following the meaning of its title this book has indeed proved worthy of its name.
Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, and Nugent, have gained many friends, and I thank you all for the many kindly letters of criticism I have received. "KIDNAPPED" is the title of our next story, and you will like it!

THE EDITOR.

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